School of Theology at Claremont
1001 1406353

Theology Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

Presented to my beloved daughter
Mrs. Frances H. Emerson
on her birth-day Anniversary—
Braintree September 24th 1883,
with a father's love & best wishes.
Robert Crawford

Painted by Wilde & Jewitt

Engraved by J. Sartain

E. D. Griffin

BR
.7233
G73
1839
V.2

SERMONS

BY THE LATE

REV. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D.D.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

BY

WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION IN ALBANY.

VOLUME II.

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN S. TAYLOR,
THEOLOGICAL AND SUNDAY SCHOOL BOOKSELLER,
BRICK CHURCH CHAPEL.

1839.

SERMON VIII.

LUKE xxiv. 50, 51.

The ascension and dominion of Christ, ... 111

SERMON IX.

I TIM. i. 16.

The patience of Christ, ... 127

SERMON X.

JOHN xviii. 36.

Christ's kingdom not of this world, ... 143

SERMON XI.

ACTS vii. 59.

Calling on the name of Jesus, ... 159

SERMON XII.

GEN. xxii. 2.

Self denial, ... 173

SERMON XIII.

GEN. v. 24.

Enoch walked with God, ... 191

SERMON XIV.

II COR. xii. 10.

When I am weak, then am I strong, ... 209

SERMON XV.

ISAIAH xlix. 14–16.

The faithfulness of God, ... 223

SERMON XVI.

GAL. iv. 7.

Son and heir through Christ, ... 239

SERMON XVII.

MAT. xxii. 35–40.

Love to our neighbor, ... 253

SERMON XVIII.

II KINGS ii. 14.

Where is the Lord God of Elijah? 275

SERMON XIX.

Heb. xi. 35.

The better resurrection, ... 291

SERMON XX.

I Cor. xiii. 11.

When I was a child I thought as a child, ... 307

SERMON XXI.

Heb. xi. 13.

The pilgrim, ... 319

SERMON XXII.

Psalm lxxiii. 25.

Whom have I in heaven but thee, ... 337

SERMON XXIII.

Rev. ii. 4, 5.

Forsaken the first love, ... 351

SERMON XXIV.

Gen. viii. 9.

The dove, ... 365

SERMON XXV.

Rev. ii. 17.

Manna, ... 379

SERMON XXVI.

Gen. xxxii. 28.

The heart of God affected by prayer, ... 393

SERMON XXVII.

Gen. xxii. 14.

Jehovah Jireh, ... 407

SERMON XXIX.*

Gen. xlii. 36.

All these things are against me, ... 421

* By an error of the press in numbering the sermons, XXVIII. is omitted.

SERMON XXX.

Heb. xi. 10.

Heaven, ... 433

SERMON XXXI.

II Pet. iii. 13.

New heavens and new earth, ... 449

SERMON XXXII.

Rev. v. 6.

The Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne, ... 467

SERMON XXXIII.

Jer. iii. 19.

How can I put thee among the children? 481

SERMON XXXIV.

Gen. xxi. 17.

What aileth thee? 497

SERMON XXXV.

Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

Can these bones live? 513

SERMON XXXVI.

Psalm xlv. 5.

Arrows sharp in the heart of enemies, ... 527

SERMON XXXVII.

Jer. xxxi. 31–34.

Salvation taken into God's own hands, ... 543

SERMON XXXVIII.

Gen. xxiv. 49.

Abraham's steward, ... 557

SERMON XXXIX.

Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8.

The watchman, ... 573

SERMON XL.

Luke xiii. 28.

The weeping at the last day, ... 587

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

JESUS OF NAZARETH PASSING BY.

MAT. XX. 29–34.*

And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And behold two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them because they should hold their peace; but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes, and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

From comparing the accounts of the different evangelists, it appears that one of these unhappy men was Bartimeus,—that they sat by the road to ask alms,—that hearing the noise of the passing multitude they inquired the cause, and found that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by,—that when they raised their cries of suppliant distress, he sent messengers to call them,—that when their eyes were opened they "followed him, glorifying God,"

* Preached in a revival.

and that "all the people when they saw it, gave praise unto God."

The time of this transaction was awfully critical. He who came into the world to open the eyes of the blind, was now on his last journey to Jerusalem, where in a few days, he was to suffer death. He was at Jericho, but twenty miles from the scene of his sufferings. His stay in that city was ended, and he had just set out for the spot from which he was to leave the world. His work on earth was nearly finished. He never was to come that way again.

The bodily cures which Christ performed in the days of his flesh, were designed to announce him to the world as the great Physician of the soul, and to teach sinners how to apply to him for spiritual healing. I am therefore authorized to employ this piece of history for such a purpose.

My first remark is, that it was necessary for these blind men to be by the way side while Jesus was passing by. Had they been any where else, they could not have received their sight. However fixed the event was in the counsels of heaven, their being by the way side was an established link in the chain leading to the happy change. Without that means, the end was never to be accomplished. And it was necessary for them to be there at the very punctum of time when Jesus was passing by. They might have sat there for years at any other time without effect. So it is necessary for ruined men to attend solemnly and earnestly and sincerely on all the means of grace, without which, they are not in the

neighborhood of any way by which the Saviour is wont to pass. It is in the person of his Spirit that he passes, while the Gospel and its institutions are the chariot on which he rides or the way by which he goes. And it is specially important that men should keep by this way in those solemn seasons when the Saviour is passing in the more abundant power of his Spirit.

Being near the road, the blind men caught the first sound of the approaching Saviour, and wondering what it should mean, learnt, to their infinite advantage, that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. So men who are solemnly attentive to the means of grace, perceive in such a day as this, that the Saviour of sinners is passing by, and are far more likely than others to apply and receive their sight; while those who are buried in their farms and their merchandize, know not that a Saviour is passing, and lose the opportunity to make their application to him.

It was not enough for these blind men to sit *idly* by the way side while Jesus was passing, without faith or application to him. They might have sat thus till they died, and no benefit would have ensued. So men may carelessly attend on the means of grace, and for want of an earnest and believing application to the Son of David, may die blind.

These unhappy men, knowing themselves to be wholly unworthy of the Saviour's notice, made no demands, but only sued for mercy. And sinners, if they would succeed, must be far from thinking themselves justly entitled to salvation, and that they

should be injured if refused. They must feel infinitely unworthy of this grace. They must abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes. They must get down into the deepest dust. They must look up, like Jonah, from the bottom of the mountains. They must send up their cry as from the bowels of hell,—and never name any thing but mercy,—free, rich, and amazing mercy,—boundless, self-moving mercy. On this they must cast themselves,—cast all their weight,—rest all their hopes,—ground all their confidence. Mercy, mercy, mercy,—this must be their only plea,—this must be their exclusive trust.

In the *earnestness* of these unfortunate men we see an affecting example for us. Hearing that the wondrous man was near who had healed so many, their hearts flutter with joy and great expectations, and go forth in the impassioned cry, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David." You hear not a few faint words between jest and earnest. In all the fervor of heart-felt distress, and with no hope resting on any other, their bursting prayer still is, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David."

Nor could they be silenced by all the frowns of the multitude, who, either considering them too mean for the Saviour's notice, or disgusted at their earnestness, commanded them to hold their peace. But they cried so much the more, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou Son of David." And thus sinners who have discovered their guilt and perishing need of a Saviour, and who see that on him depends their eternal all, will not be silenced

by all the frowns and criticisms of the world. Feeling that no other hand in heaven or earth can relieve them,—that the success or failure of their application will make or undo them for eternity, they are not to be kept back by the fastidiousness of the formal or the scoffs of the profane.

We cannot but notice the great difference between those who feel their necessities and those who are whole and know not their needs. How much more precious did Jesus appear in the eyes of Bartimeus than in those of his proud rebukers.

These blind men would not have been so pressing had they not deeply felt three things;—that they were blind and wretched, that Jesus was the Saviour, with full power to open their eyes, and that he was the only helper. Nor will sinners apply to him till they discover that they are utterly lost in themselves, that he is the very one appointed to deliver them and is able to save to the uttermost, that there is no other name given under heaven whereby they can be saved, that all the men on earth and all the angels in heaven cannot relieve them, and that their eternal all depends on the Son of David.

It is affecting to see the difference between the unfeeling multitude and the compassionate Saviour. No sooner did he hear the cry of these unfortunate men than he sent messengers to bring them to him. These messengers, like the preachers of the Gospel, bade them be of good cheer for he called them. The same blessed words do I this day proclaim in your ears. Is there a poor sinner in all those seats

who has been raising his anxious cry to the Son of David? Blessed tidings, my friend. Put thine ear to the Gospel and listen. "He calleth thee."

When they approached him the condescending Saviour said to them, "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" I have it in my power to do whatever you desire. "They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened." We come not to ask for riches or honors, but Lord, that we may receive our sight. O that you would approach him with such direct desires for spiritual sight,—for the vision of God and the Lamb. But other things fill your minds. You are thinking more of the stripes you may receive, than of any glory which you wish to behold.

And were these humble suppliants denied? Without reluctance or delay, Jesus touched their eyes and restored their sight. And forever blessed be his name, we do assuredly know that every sinner in this house would, upon due application, be relieved with equal readiness.

While the weary and heavy laden cast a wishful look towards this scene, and perceive how Jesus came by, and how easily the blind men applied and found relief, they are ready to say, O that I had lived in that day, or that it was as easy now to find relief. Unhappy man, form no hasty conclusion against yourself. Jesus of Nazareth is as present now as he was then, and as ready to heal. With open arms he stands ready to receive you. He is very near to you, and you may apply to him without going out of your way. Hark! poor de-

sponding sinner, he calleth thee. Repair to him and hear what he will say. "Unhappy soul, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? Dost thou want pardon, thou shalt have it; holiness, thou shalt have it; happiness, heaven, thou shalt have it all. What is thy petition, and what is thy request? and it shall be done unto thee, to the half, nay to the whole of my kingdom." Dost thou not hear him? Why then not let him know thy desire? Why not seize the critical moment and pour the fervid wish into his ear, Lord, that my eyes may be opened?

It was the last time that Jesus ever passed that way before he left the world. Had these unhappy men been a little out of the way at that moment, or having been by the way, had they suffered him to pass without raising their cries of distress, they must inevitably have died blind. The next hour would have been too late. It was their last chance.

This is a solemn reflection as it relates to you, my Christless hearers. The present passage of the Saviour may prove the last chance to many of you. You have very little prospect of being called in in stupid times. In such seasons, if two or three are converted in a year in a congregation, it is as much as is expected: but what is this to the salvation of the great mass of the people? What is this to the number of births in the same congregation in the course of a year? During the present generation, almost all who have been gathered into the American Church, especially in places favored with revivals, have been brought in in seasons of revival. There is very little prospect therefore

that you, individually considered, will be brought in in times of general stupidity. And before another revival of religion, many of you, in all probability, will be in eternity, and many of the rest hardened past recovery, or at least past the age of probable conversion. It has been generally calculated that by far the greater part of the elect are called in under the age of twenty, and very few after the middle of life, and next to none in old age.

You are all flattering yourselves that you shall be prepared before you die, or else you would be agitated with great alarm. You are so confident of this that you rest secure perhaps, as though no danger was before you. But take an unawakened youth of twenty, and separate him from any revival of religion, and it is much more likely that he has a miserable eternity before him, than that he will be saved. The question of chances is always to be tried by past experience. By this rule it is tried in all insurance offices, and indeed in all the business and calculations of society. By this rule of experience then try the question respecting the prospects of that careless youth of twenty. Have half of those who have lived without God till twenty, given evidence of being afterwards converted? If so, then *more* than half of the people over twenty are Christians, and have been so from age to age. I say, *more* than half, for you must add to that half all that were converted under twenty and are now above that age: and the greater part of the elect are supposed to be converted under twenty. Now go into the most favored town in the

United States; go after the greatest revival that ever passed through it; and can you find the greater part of the people above twenty even professing religion? Such a community would be celebrated as a phenomenon throughout the Christian world. No such community was ever known. The inevitable conclusion is, that the greater part of those who live unsanctified till the age of twenty, do, even in our most favored towns, die in their sins. That careless youth then of twenty, is this moment more likely to spend his eternity in fire than on a throne of glory. This proposition is as true as that one half of the American people are not likely to live to the age of a hundred. And both propositions are as true as that two and two make four.

But the case is still more discouraging. Do *one in ten* who have passed their twentieth year out of Christ ever profess religion? Look for yourselves. Select the most favored town within your knowledge. Compare the handful at the communion table with the swarms that fill the streets. Can you find the town in which one in ten above twenty years of age profess religion? I know not the proportions, but for the present argument say one in ten. Many of these are false professors, and many of the pious were converted under twenty. Say that such has been the proportion from time immemorial, and of course is likely to continue during the present generation. Then that careless youth of twenty stands *more* than ten chances to one to be eternally miserable.

The great deceiver has told you all that you

would be prepared before you die. And so he told the last generation of wretches who went to hell. And so he has told every generation since Adam. But while he is soothing you with this lie, it is still an awful truth that a careless youth of twenty, or even of eighteen, is far more likely to spend his eternity in hell than in heaven. Tremendous thought! enough to overwhelm the soul.

And if this is true of a careless youth of eighteen or twenty, what shall we say of a careless man of thirty? what of a stupid sinner of forty? what, of a wretched unbeliever of fifty? There are probably people in this town against whom lie a hundred chances to one, who yet are as secure as though no danger was before them, and never lift a prayer to God. And yet they are not lunatics. This is one of the most unaccountable mysteries of the moral world.

Young people often calculate to put off religion till old age; but alas few in old age are brought home to God.

Such are your dangers now. There is some more hope for you on account of this revival. But should this heavenly call be rejected,—should this revival pass off unimproved,—the chances against you would be greater than they ever were before. This season will not leave you as it found you. You will never again be as you have been. You must be better or worse. Be you ever so stupid, this is a call from heaven to *you*. These wonders of grace which are spread around you,—these tears and entreaties which assail you,—these many opportuni-

ties afforded you to pray and to be instructed, are the voice of the Holy Spirit in your ears. You may array your pride and harden your hearts as you will, but this revival is still the voice of God to you, and you must account for an infinite privilege at the judgment of the great day. You may run from the place and seek to flee from the presence of God as Jonah did, but he will pursue you and hold you answerable for this slighted call. If you reject all this grace of God, your guilt and your danger will be what they never were before.

All this is true of the most stupid of you all; but it is pre-eminently true of the awakened. The louder the call the more certain that this is the crisis of your fate. God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The most wicked and hazardous business that ever man attempted, was to resist the Holy Ghost. This, when carried to a certain extent and combined with malice, is the sin unto death that can never be forgiven. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,—if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame." It is likely that in every revival of any considerable extent, some, for their sin against the Holy Ghost, are sealed over to eternal death. It is more than probable that this will be the case with some at this time and place.

Select any one of this congregation who has arrived at years of discretion, and let him remain impenitent after this revival has passed away, and it will be much more likely that he will perish than that he will be saved. Has not this been fairly made out by past experience as attested by the obvious state of society in every place? If so, then there is a high degree of probability that this is the turning point for eternity with that youth of eighteen or twenty; and there is almost a certainty that it is the turning point with that man of fifty or of forty. With both then it is likely to be the last time that Jesus will pass this way in season to open their eyes. O let the case of the blind men who were never to hear him pass that way again, their impassioned prayer, and their great relief, stand ever before you. Hear their cry which nothing can suppress, "Have mercy on us, O Lord thou son of David." Go ye and do likewise. Let not Jesus get out of the place before he has opened your eyes. Another revival may come before you die, but it will be likely to spend its chief force on those who are now children or unborn: revivals exhaust their power chiefly on the young. If not in your graves, you may be where an angel's voice could not break your slumbers. In such a crisis of your fate how is it possible for any of you to remain stupid? What dreams of madness are employing your sleeping fancy? What fumes from hell have bewildered your rational sense? If you have not deliberately resolved to lie down in eternal

burnings, arise and take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Delay not a moment. Urge no excuse. By the worth of your never-dying souls I entreat you,—by the love and sorrows of Calvary I adjure you,—by the authority of the ever-living God I charge you, not to reject this mission of the Holy Ghost. Your everlasting all is at stake. It is likely to be your last chance. And if any thing is done you must rise up to an agony. These saunterings between jest and earnest are only trifling with the Spirit and will provoke him to leave you. Either fixedly resolve to perish, and set yourselves firmly to resist God and his people, or come up to the business with all your heart and soul. Halt no longer between two opinions. Do not stand at too awful a distance from the Saviour. Imitate the blind men and go up to him with confidence. Be of good cheer, "he calleth thee." By the soft whispers of his Spirit he calleth thee. And if he can call, you may venture to go. Shrink not on account of your poverty and pollution. It is the same Jesus still,—the same heart that pitied the blind men of Jericho. Go to him boldly, and when he would know your request, cry in his ears, Lord, that my eyes may be opened. Why will you die when such a glorious Deliverer is so near? Why will ye go down to hell; like the dying thief, from the very side of an atoning Saviour? I call heaven and earth to witness that if you perish after this, your blood will be upon your own head. And if you go down from these streets through which the kindest of all Sa-

viours is passing, you will wish ten thousand times that you had gone to hell before this revival,—that you had been in hell on the day that this sermon was preached. O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end. Turn ye; turn ye, for why will ye die? Why *will* ye die, O my flesh and blood?

SERMON II.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

JOHN III. 14, 15.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Jesus and his salvation were the substance of all the ancient shadows, the end of all the Mosaic rites, and the burden of every prophet's song. They were the favorite theme of the Old Testament and the New. They are the subject of the highest songs of the upper world. They bring the purest joy to hearts on earth broken for sin.

There are few types of happier influence to illustrate the Gospel remedy and the manner of its application than the brazen serpent. When the Hebrews provoked God in the wilderness, he sent among them fiery serpents of a most deadly bite; so called either from their colour, or from the heat and thirst occasioned by the wound. They were

probably of the species of the "fiery *flying* serpents" mentioned by Isaiah. It is supposed that they hovered in swarms over the camp and suddenly darted upon their prey; none of the congregation being able while on their march, and few being able in their encampments, to defend themselves against the fell attack. What a scene of distress was here! Hundreds lying dead in the camp; hundreds more writhing in torture and crying in vain for relief; every one trembling for himself; now a child and then a wife and then a brother crying out under the tormenting bite; and swarms of the enemy still hovering over the camp. What could they do? They hasted away to Moses and said with tears, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee. Pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us." And Moses prayed for the people, and the Lord said to him, "Make thee a fiery serpent, [that is, the *image* of a fiery serpent,] and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass and put it upon a pole, [so that it could be seen from every part of the camp:] and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived." Glorious emblem of him who was "lifted up that whosoever, believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life."

This brazen serpent was preserved with great veneration seven hundred years, until it had become so much the object of idolatrous worship, that He-

zekiah broke it in pieces about a century before the Babylonish captivity.

Let us trace a little more particularly the resemblance between this type and the antitype.

1. It was provided for people in a condition somewhat resembling that of the race to whom the Saviour was sent. Many of them were groaning under the anguish of their wounds and ready to die, others heard the cries of their parents and children around them, and could neither snatch them from death nor afford them a moment's relief. Such is the state of those for whom a Saviour was provided. They are dying under the tormenting inflictions of sin; panting with restless desires which nothing can satisfy; or tossing under anguish of conscience and a "fearful looking for of judgment." They behold around them the wide ruins which sin has made. They contemplate the present and endless misery of their parents and children, without being able to afford them any relief. The whole race lie in ruins, amidst the wide and frightful ravages of the curse,—amidst misery and death in a countless variety of forms; walking over clods once animated with human life,—seeing their brethren huddled together in the grave, and all the living going down after them,—sinking, sinking, till they are out of sight;—death temporal and death eternal swallowing up all. Such is the ruin of a world smitten with the curse of the Almighty. What need there was of a Saviour to seize a race going down to hell, to force death to resign its prey, and to call sleeping nations from the tomb.

Another resembling circumstance in the condition of the people was, that they appeared penitent. They confessed their sins and implored forgiveness. As soon as these symptoms of contrition appeared, (and nothing could be done before,) God ordered the remedy to be presented. In like manner the Saviour is revealed to none but to those who are humbled. He came to preach good tidings only to the meek, to bind up none but broken hearts.

2. The brazen serpent had the *form* of the fiery serpents, but not their poison. So Christ, though he came "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and possessed both the body and the soul of a man, had none of our depravity.

3. The bite of the serpents must be cured by the *lifting up*, not of an eagle, but of a *serpent*. So Christ must take upon himself, not "the nature of angels, but—the seed of Abraham." "In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren." It must be *man* that is *lifted up* to atone for the sins of man.

The serpent must be lifted up conspicuously in the midst of the camp, where all the eyes of Israel might centre upon it: and the Son of man must be lifted up in the centre of the world, on the top of Jerusalem, environed with proofs drawn from heaven and earth, brought in from the whole body of the Old Testament and confirmed by the miracles of the New; and there, in the midst of the world, in the centre of light, where all nations might see the reality and the divine appointment of the sacrifice, he made expiation for the sins of the world.

This is the chief meaning of his being lifted up. The phrase is twice used, in this sense, in other parts of the same Gospel. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, [for they understood him,] We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever, and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up?"

There is another sense in which the Son of man was to be lifted up in order to be the Saviour of the world. He was to be raised from the dead, and thus openly acquitted and accepted, that in his justification we might be acquitted and accepted. He "was raised again for our justification."

There is yet another sense in which he was to be lifted up. He was to ascend into heaven, there "to appear in the presence of God for us;" there to receive and distribute the whole inheritance; there to rule the universe and complete the salvation of his people. Thus he was to be exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

Had not the brazen serpent been lifted up, all who were bitten must have died. Not all the physicians in Israel could have brought relief. Had any caviller been disposed to say, "What is a brazen serpent? and cannot God heal his people without it?" yet, when bitten himself, he must have died if he had not looked to that remedy. And although the cross of Christ is to some "a stumbling block"

and to others "foolishness," yet without it no child of Adam could have been saved; and without a believing application to it, all must perish still.

4. The serpent being thus erected in full view of the camp, the people, when bitten, had only to *fix their eyes* upon it and they lived. Wounded to death and racked with pain, they had only to cast their languishing eyes on this serpent of brass, and all the fire within them was quenched,—all their anguish relieved. Precious symbol of a precious Saviour! When the soul, under conviction of guilt, sees hell naked before it and destruction without a covering, let it then catch one view of Christ atoning for the sins of the world,—of Christ exalted to the seat of intercession and rule; let there be opened upon it one sun-shine of God's mercy and truth; and all its anguish and fear are soothed, and the dying sinner lives: his sense of guilt and wrath is changed to a sense of pardoning love,—his midnight darkness to a morning without clouds. Instead of lying, weak and helpless, under the feet of trampling foes, he feels omnipotence growing up within him, and he can march boldly against earth and hell combined. All that is wanting to bring everlasting relief to the most abject guilt and wretchedness, is to fix a believing eye on Christ,—is to embrace him as a complete Saviour, and to take, with him, all that God has tendered to men,—is to rely on him as the great High Priest appointed by God to atone and intercede, and whose offering God has sworn to accept,—is to confide in the sincerity of God in this appointment and oath. When

these great truths open on the soul, and the glory of God is seen shining in the face of Jesus Christ, the believer sees that were his guilt doubled ten thousand times, he might easily be forgiven, and feels that if he had ten thousand souls he could venture them all upon a precious Saviour; that there is a fulness in him for the necessities of all the lost children of Adam: and he wonders why a whole world do not come to him and partake.

It is a great thing to believe these sublime realities. The heart of man is prone to unbelief. For God to pardon sins so enormous, and be so kind to enemies and rebels, is so unlike the human heart, that it is hard for men to believe it. And under the glooms of guilt it seems too good news to be true. And then they have but little confidence in God, and fear to trust him for so much. They are not in the habit of ascribing to him any great desires to make his creatures happy. But when the wonders of his love open on the soul, and Christ is seen as a lamb upon the altar and a lamb in the midst of his father's throne, then the sinner forgets his pains; his glooms are fled; his conscience, purged "from dead works," is filled with peace,—with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The vilest sinner has a warrant thus to believe, thus to receive the Saviour, and thus to rejoice in him. For the offer is to all; aud in believing all this he only believes the word and oath of God,—an oath sworn by himself and attested by miracles: he only believes Christ to be what he really is,—a highway paved to the throne of mercy, by which a whole world may go

abreast. Such a view, attended, as it will be, with a willingness to receive him, and which will bring an instant consciousness of its own existence, cannot fail to produce a sense of safety. Christ is seen to be a rock on which the soul may rest, and on which it is conscious of resting. It knows that it has not a phantom in its embrace, but the very God of Israel.

One look at the brazen serpent was enough to relieve the most desperate case. Nothing in the patient,—nothing which he had done, or had been, or then was, could prevent his cure, provided it did not prevent him from looking. No merit was required for an efficacious look. The bad and the good might equally enjoy the privilege. That they were bitten was no prevention, but the very reason why they ought to look. In like manner faith in Christ will heal the vilest sinner that ever descended from Adam. There is nothing in any man,—nothing which he has done, has been, or is, which can prevent his cure, provided it does not prevent him from looking. No merit is required, nor any one virtue but what is involved in an operative faith. That men are sinners is no prevention. It is the very reason why they ought to look. All that is necessary to fit the vilest sinner for heaven, is faith in Christ; not a dead faith, but that faith which includes repentance, love, and good works; not a belief that Christ died for me in particular, without any thing above a selfish temper; but a holy approbation of all that appears of God in his law and works,—of all that appears of Christ in his gospel

and providence. If one's temper and life do not reflect the image of God, he never believed in him that was lifted up.

5. On what *easy terms* might the poor, distressed Hebrews live. They had not to search the world for physicians, and spend all they had and only grow worse. They had only to cast their eyes on the image that was lifted up; and this they might do without money or price, and without going out of their way. And equally easy it is to be healed of the wounds of sin. Wondrous grace! After men have raised such mountains between them and God, and lie buried under worlds of guilt, the weight of which is crushing them to the lowest hell; has heaven provided that they shall be so readily forgiven? Had they been permitted to hope after doing penance for years,—after wandering for ages through the world,—after giving their first born for their transgression, the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul,—even then the grace would have transcended thought: but to have the whole debt discharged with no other pain or expense to them than to look on him who was lifted up; this is indeed "the exceeding riches of his grace."

6. And in this way men *must* be pardoned if pardoned at all. Had God required them to make any part of the atonement; that is, to contribute a mite towards answering the purpose of their eternal punishment without enduring it; on that spot had been entombed the last hope of man;—there had been an end to all compact between heaven and earth.

On the other hand, after the atonement is provided, there can be no salvation, to those who hear the Gospel, without faith. After the serpent had been erected, had the wounded Hebrews neglected to look at it, they would have remained in torments till they died. All the physicians in Israel could not have relieved them. No other remedy in heaven or earth was provided. And provided it might be, yet had they refused to look, it would have been in vain. Of what avail would it have been to say, "What is the use of looking at this thing? if virtue is in it cannot that be conveyed but through the eyes?" A thousand such cavils could not have mitigated their anguish nor gained for them a moment's respite from death. There was indeed no such merit in looking. The efficacy depended on God's appointment, that was intended to set forth the efficacy of faith in a Saviour to come. And this Saviour may be provided,—may be displayed in our streets, yet if we do not fix our eyes upon him, we shall die none the better but all the worse for this provision. All the strictness of morality, all the prayers of ages, the giving of all our goods to feed the poor and our bodies to be burned as martyrs, would not avail without faith. It is of no use for unbelief to plead "How can I be benefited by looking on perfection which only shames my guilt?" What if there is no intrinsic merit in faith? By divine appointment it is made the condition of salvation. Nor was this appointment arbitrary. In the nature of things, without that holiness which, in the circumstances of men under the Gospel, can-

not fail to embrace a Saviour, there can be no communion with God,—no heavenly happiness.—Further, it was calculated to familiarize to the universe the great fact of the substitution, for both parties, (God and the sinner,) to stand, as it were, together at the altar, and as the Lamb is slain, to consent mutually that its life should go for the life of the sinner. Without this consent on the part of man, the vicarious exhibition is far less distinct and impressive. Also, without this consent and the accompanying conviction of need, the sinner can never feel his indebtedness to the Saviour nor give the glory of his salvation to the Sacred Three, nor indeed be happy, if he is an adult under the Gospel. On these accounts faith in Christ is made the essential condition of salvation. When he was on earth, carrying about in his person the healing virtue of the brazen serpent, all who looked to him for a cure were healed; and it was his practice first to extort from them a profession of their faith: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"

And now, my dear brethren, suffer me to hold up before you the antitype of the brazen serpent. If any of you are mourning under guilt and filled with anguish, raise your believing eyes to him who is lifted up in the midst of this assembly to-day; and one look will make you whole. Ye who are groping in darkness, look hither and be enlightened. Ye who are weak and polluted, look and be strong and pure. Ye who complain of hardness of heart, cast your eyes upon him who hangs on the tree covered with sweat and blood, and be melted into con-

trition and love. Ye who are tempted, look and be delivered. Ye who are agonized with doubts respecting your adoption, look again and gain a clearer vision and a firmer assurance. Whatever be your infirmities or your sorrows, look,—from every part of the house look, to him who is lifted up in the midst of this congregation. As the serpent was erected in the centre of the camp, so Christ has been lifted up in the centre of the world, that all eyes from east, west, north, and south may centre there. There he hangs, and every lacerated vein bleeds balm for the healing of the nations. He sheds influence in every direction to heal all other wounds but his own. And from the top of the bloody tree I hear a voice trembling in death, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." While millions of eyes are turned thither from all the regions of the globe, and millions of souls are healed by a look, my heart exclaims, "How much is this like that wondrous scene in the wilderness!" I ascend the high and trembling mount, whence I have a view of a world gazing at the cross by which I stand. I see ten thousand eyes, glistening with joy and tears, meet in this centre, from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. I see new faces turned this way. I see their distorted features settle into heavenly peace as they gaze: and now they brighten, and now they shine as Moses' did. I stand and enjoy the transports of nations. Ye kingdoms of redeemed sinners, roll hither the volume of your united praise. Shout, for the healer of the nations is lifted up.—— I fol-

low him up to heaven. I see him, with solemn formality, take his throne. Every eye which lately gazed at Calvary, follows him hither. He takes the reins of government, and a voice, deep as ten thousand thunders and sweet as the "influences of Pleiades," issues from the glorious throne, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." A mingled sound, as "of many waters," responds, "We come, Lord, we come." And let *us* go with them. Let us go and commit ourselves eternally to him who is our righteousness, our strength, our all in all. Amen.

SERMON III.

NOAH'S ARK.

HEB. II. 7.

By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

During the 1656 years which were before the flood, if men increased as fast in proportion to their longevity as they do now, a much greater population must have accumulated on the earth than there is at present. In that period when the age of man was more than 900 years, the temptation to put death out of view was great. A Church there was; but by intermarrying with the wicked world it had become corrupt, and at last almost extinct. This was the first illustration of the fatal consequence of too close a connexion between the Church and the world. The children of the Church became ambitious of power and fame, and sought renown by violence and war. By these means the Spirit of God

was provoked to depart, and general licentiousness ensued. The Church became reduced to a single family, and the rest of the world sunk into infidelity and vice. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;"—that "the imagination of man's heart" was "evil from his youth." Thus the universal and complete effect of the fall was publicly ascertained. This done, God determined to cast away the world as ruined, and to make a new beginning on the foundation of grace, commencing a new stock in the family which included the whole church. This rejection of the world is expressed in the following strong eastern figure: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."

"And God said to Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me;—behold I will destroy them with the earth." Noah, who was born 69 years after the translation of his great grand father Enoch, was now 480 years old, and seems to have been childless. Except his grandfather Methuselah, who, though born 243 years before the death of Adam, lived till the year of the flood, and his father Lamech, who, born 56 years before the death of Adam, died five years before the deluge, he was perhaps the only religious man on earth. But though God determined that his Spirit should "not always strive with man," he graciously allowed the antediluvian sinners a respite of "a hundred and twenty years;" and in the meantime ordained Noah "a preacher of

righteousness" to them. At the same time he directed him to construct an ark of gopher wood, about 547 feet long, 91 broad, and 55 feet high. This immense building, which covered considerably more than an acre of ground and was three stories high, was capacious enough to hold "eight" persons, with a pair of every sort of unclean beasts and unclean fowls and creeping things, and seven pair of every sort of clean beasts and clean fowls, and provisions for their support for more than a year.

For a hundred and twenty years "the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was preparing." The history leads us to suppose that the whole of this period was taken up in building the ark, as we cannot reckon the hundred and twenty years of respite from any other date than the issuing of the command to commence the building. In the infancy of the arts such a vessel must have cost immense labor, and it was so unpopular an undertaking that few if any besides the family of Noah would be induced to engage in the the work. His sons were born about twenty years after the building commenced, and for a long time could afford him no assistance. Cheered by the society and counsel of his venerable father and grandfather, he wore out the hundred and twenty years in patiently waiting for the fulfilment of the prediction.

When the ark was finished, God brought all the creatures into it and shut Noah and his family in.

In the account which follows, there is so obvious

a proof of the division of time into weeks, and consequently of the existence of a sabbath, that I cannot pass it by unnoticed. If we knew the day of the week on which Noah entered into the ark, we could tell the day of the week on which almost every event took place till he came out. Suppose then it was Tuesday. And this seems perhaps the most probable. For after the devotions of the sabbath to prepare for the solemn scene, one day was sufficient for God to collect the animals that were to enter. On Tuesday then, let us suppose, Noah and his family entered the ark. After seven days' that is, on the following Tuesday, the rains commenced; which after a continuance of forty days, ended on the sabbath, the day of blessings from the beginning. On Friday, exactly five months, of 30 days each, from the commencement of the rain, the ark rested on Ararat. In better than ten weeks more, on Tuesday, just 33 weeks after the family entered the ark, and just 32 weeks after the rains commenced, the lesser mountains appeared. Near six weeks after, just 32 weeks after the rains had ceased, on the morning of the blessed sabbath, Noah opened the window of the ark and sent out the raven and the dove. The next sabbath he sent out the dove again, which returned in the evening with the olive leaf of peace. The next sabbath he sent out the dove the third time, which returned no more. This was on the 25th day of the 11th month, just 34 weeks after the rains had ceased.

Hitherto we have proceeded on sure grounds; but now we are to pass the end of the year and find

the next event on new year's day. We ought therefore to know how long the year was. All the most ancient nations known to us, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Hindoos, had a year of 360 days, divided into 12 months of 30 days each. But afterwards they added, at an early period, five intercalary days to the end of the year. It is manifest from the account before us, that the antediluvian year was divided into months of 30 days each, and must have consisted of twelve such months, either with or without the five intercalary days. I will make the calculation on both suppositions.

In case no intercalation was made, Noah, after sending forth the dove the third time, waited five weeks, and then, after spending the sabbath in thanksgiving and prayer preparatory to the event, on Monday he removed the covering of the ark. He waited eight weeks longer, and then, after the solemnities of another sabbath, on Monday he left the ark and entered once more with his family into the world, having been immured 54 weeks wanting a day. If the five intercalary days were added, he waited after the last mission of the dove, near six weeks, and then, on Saturday, preparatory to a day of joyful thanksgiving and rest, he removed the covering of the ark. He waited eight weeks longer, and then, on Saturday, he went forth and made preparations, and devoted the first day in the new world to the exultations and doxologies of a blessed sabbath; having been immured 54 weeks and four days.

Whether I have referred the events to the right

days of the week or not, the division of time into weeks, and consequently the existence of a sabbath, lies on the very face of this account.

A new world now commenced. Noah lived to within two years of the birth of Abraham; and Shem, who was 98 years old when Methuselah died, lived ten years after the marriage of Isaac. So that the same man that conversed with Abraham and Isaac, had conversed with one who had conversed with Adam.

But I proceed to other remarks. The ark is admitted by the apostle to have been a distinguished type of Christ. The old world is devoted to destruction. The waters are to rise and rage above the highest mountains. No vessel has yet been invented to ride the waves. How can any escape? God only can find out the way. He causes an ark to be constructed, in which his friends find refuge while the waves of wrath sweep a wicked world. Who that turns his eye towards this scene, is not reminded of that spiritual ark in which the friends of God are sheltered while the floods of vengeance sweep an unbelieving world?

This prepares the way for us to meditate on the conduct of Noah while laboring for that refuge, and the conduct of that profligate generation who cast contempt on the august design. The things most worthy of notice in respect to Noah, are his faith, his obedience, his patience, his self-denial, and his fortitude.

(1.) His *faith*. While he sat at rest in his house, pursuing a life of devotion, and mourning over the

abounding wickedness of the times, he heard a voice ;—a voice declaring that the end of all flesh was at hand ;—a voice which fixed the event and the manner, but concealed the time. The voice assured him that the wicked should be destroyed, and that the only safety for him was in an ark, which he must at once set about preparing. All this was strange, and different from any thing he had experienced. Yet the patriarch believed God. He did not doubt because he had never seen such a thing before, nor because the events predicted might be at a considerable distance. He admitted a realizing belief that the wicked *would* be destroyed, and that *his* only safety was in an ark. His faith was sufficient to influence his *conduct* and to lead him to the labor of 120 years. Not knowing how near the deluge might be, and contemplating so vast a work before him, he saw that he had no time to lose. He felt the urgent call for haste, apprehending that if he delayed, the deluge might come before he was ready ; at the same time trusting in God that if he was diligent the judgment would be deferred till he was prepared. Here were all the trials of faith which good men experience now. O that they could as fully believe the threats and promises of God ; and while they feel the pressing need of haste, could trust in him to connect their diligence with the promised salvation. Let them not doubt because the events foretold differ from their past experience, nor because they are a few years distant.

Noah believed God because his mind was not

blinded by sin; but his contemporaries were blinded. This was the difference between them. He believed God's threatenings and promises, and they believed not. Hence he could consume the labor of 120 years in building an ark, and they could spend that solemn time in mocking at his sacred toil. They could not have acted thus had they *believed* that a flood was coming on the world. This is the difficulty with sinners now. Though God has foretold the destruction of the wicked, they do not believe it. Did they verily believe that the destruction would come, and that there is no safety but in the spiritual ark, they could not thus reject a Saviour and sleep out life in mad security.

(2.) Let us consider the *obedience* of the patriarch. God ordained him to provide for his safety by constructing an ark; he did not hesitate a moment: he entered on the work at once, and consumed 120 years in one unbroken course of obedience. And let us who are commanded to secure the spiritual ark, obey, and devote our whole lives to the attainment of this end.

(3.) Consider his *patience* under labors and sufferings the length of which he could not foresee. There is no account of his impatience under the hardships of 120 years, nor of his complaining that the time was long, though it probably proved much longer than he had expected. Possibly at no time during the whole period did he look upon the flood as far distant; and yet deliverance continued to fly. But his patience never failed. O that christians

could now as patiently submit to the labors and trials of the spiritual warfare half as long, without complaining that their hardships have no end.

(4.) Contemplate his *self-denial*. He possessed great wealth, or he could not have built such an ark. Before this command came he was probably engaged in extensive business, and found his wealth flowing in from every quarter. But at the command of God he gave up all other employments and consumed his wealth upon that immense building, which could be of no other use than to save him and his family and the animal tribes from the threatened destruction. He forsook all, and was content to wait for his remuneration in the new world,—in the world that succeeded the flood. This was as great a self-denial as for christians now to abandon all their possessions for Christ, and to wait for the recompense of another world.

(5.) Contemplate his *fortitude*. Except his father and grandfather and the rest of his own family, he stood *alone* against a frowning world. It is hard for christians now, with millions on their side, to stem the torrent of angry opposition, especially in places where that opposition triumphs. How hard then for the patriarch, with all the sensibilities of a man, to encounter, single-handed, a contending and triumphant world. He submitted to the scoffs of his acquaintance, his superiors in rank and fortune, his inferiors, his relations, his enemies; and heard, undismayed, their endless charges of bigotry, superstition, intolerance, and the like. He was a preacher of righteousness; but he preached with-

out success, and drew taunts instead of tears. He never seems to have made a single convert in 120 years. The uniform tenor of his address must have been that of warning and condemnation. The case admitted of no other. His daily labor upon the ark carried also the strong language of reprobation, "by the which he condemned the world." It constantly proclaimed the approaching destruction of the world for their wickedness. Such an unheard of enterprise as the construction of an enormous vessel to ride the waves,—the construction of it in the midst of the dry land,—under the idea that a flood was coming upon the world; a singularity fraught with apparent folly, and calculated to excite scorn as well as wrath; could not fail to call forth the highest contempt and indignation of a world. How often was he called a madman and a fool! Those who passed by would insultingly wag their heads. Others would curse him. The children would shoot out the lip at him as he walked the streets, and load him with the epithets which they had heard their fathers use. All the wit and raillery of the age would be levelled against him. The fame of his undertaking would travel to remote nations, and from all quarters derision and reproaches would come in. All this time he had no man beyond the bounds of his own family to whom he could impart his cares or on whose bosom he could repose. He could ask no counsel. He could go no where, he could look no where, without meeting the blasting frown of a world. His character was totally ruined with every person

on earth except his own family. He was shut out from all society except what he found at home. The question would often be asked, who made him wiser and better than all the world besides? That question, had he not been supported by faith as well as fortitude, would have crushed him. Losing sight of the divine testimony and commission, and looking only at himself, he would shrink into nothing, and say, "Who am I to be the reprover of a world?"

But faith joined to fortitude, supported him. His unconquered mind rose above the opinion of a united race. He would not think that sterling which all men approved, nor that vile which all men condemned. He rested on a higher decision.

The reproaches of the wicked would become more and more triumphant and insufferable the longer the event was delayed. To see the madman, as they would call him, foretelling destruction year after year, without any prospect of a fulfilment; to see him laboring to rear an enormous vessel for ten, twenty, forty, eighty, a hundred years, without any symptom of a deluge, though he might have expected it long before, and might have intimated that expectation; how high must their contempt and triumph have arisen! How often would they load him with the titles of false prophet, impostor, liar! How often would they tauntingly ask, Where is the destruction so long foretold? "for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning." But this heroic saint, far from being conquered by reproaches, resolved to believe and

obey God rather than man. With astonishing fortitude he held fast his integrity for 120 years.

At length the long expected day arrived which was to show that his labors and hopes were not in vain,—which was to put an eternal end to the scoffs and exultations of his enemies. The tremendous morning began to lour. The heavens gathered blackness. Angry tempests conflicted in the skies. The red lightnings curled over the world. Word was spread that Noah and his family had entered into the ark. The world began to look serious.

Presently floods of water pour from the sky. Some now begin to turn their eyes towards the ark; others stand doubting; others dare still to scoff.

The waters go on to increase. The channels of the rivers are full and overflowing. The waters begin to rise in the streets. Some flee into their houses; others, more intimidated, hasten to the hills; others are convinced, and with the paleness of death are seen wading towards the ark.

The fountains of the great deep are now broken up. The waters rise more rapidly, and begin to rush with impetuous force. With difficulty they stand against the stream. They struggle for their lives to reach the ark. Thousands come; some wading, some swimming, some sinking, some hanging to the ark with the grasp of death; all screaming for admission. But it is too late. Time was when the ark was open and they might have entered in; but that time is past. Where are now those tongues which derided the enormous vessel and the

man that made it? What now think you of him who for more than a century has borne the character of a madman? A thousand worlds for his condition now. Those nearest the ark cry and plead for admission, but in vain. The waters roar; the ark is taken up; they sink and are seen no more.

By this time every wretch on earth is convinced. Hear their cries from the tops of the houses, which are answered by lamentations from the hills. See the armies that are collected on the mountains. How like frighted sheep they crowd together! Now the waters, roaring and foaming, have reached their feet. They flee back to the highest ridge; the floods pursue them there. Some few climb the lofty oaks; the waves overtake them there. They flee to the highest branches, and for a while have time to reflect on their former madness. "How could I disbelieve the prophet of the Lord? Where is now the ark which I scorned? Whither am I going? O eternity! eternity! What a dreadful God have I despised!" On the topmost bough the impetuous torrent sweeps them. Their hold is broken, and they rise no more. The ark comes by. That blessed family are safe. They sail over the heads of their revilers and persecutors, until they rest on Ararat.

The same terrors will seize an unbelieving world when the Son of man appears. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered

into the ark; and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of man be.

When we reflect on the wretched antediluvians, we perceive their folly in not believing God, and are ready to say with the Jews, If we had lived in their days we should not have done thus. But sinners repeat the same folly now. God has told them that he will destroy the world;—that in less than 120 years all the wicked of the present generation shall be overwhelmed in a flood of wrath. To convince them that the destruction is coming, he has set forth a spiritual ark. He has sent out preachers of righteousness to warn them. Every circumstance is the same. The destruction is as certain; it is as near; and there is no escape but in the ark. But sinners will not believe. They spend their time perhaps in scoffing at the serious apprehensions of christians, and in contemning the ark. Greater madness never existed before the flood. The time is coming when christians will not be deemed mad men for their concern to secure an interest in Christ; when it will appear that they did not believe and labor and bear reproaches in vain. Time is coming when they who are now as secure, as hardy, as those stupid wretches before the flood, would give ten thousand worlds for the place of the meanest christian whom they now despise. When the door of the kingdom shall be shut and there is no more entering in; when they shall stand without and say, Lord, Lord, open to us, and he shall answer, I know you not; when the sluices of vengeance shall

be unstopped; when the heavens shall be on fire above their heads, and the earth shall rock beneath their feet; when the sea shall rage and rise and invade the distant land; when all the elements shall make war on man; when they shall flee from the waves and the flames shall devour them,—from the prodigies in the heavens, and the opening earth shall engulph them; when they shall stretch out their hands to God, and find him only a consuming fire; when more piteous shrieks shall be heard from every quarter than were heard in the days of the flood; when they shall see the Noahs whom they despised riding above their heads, and themselves sinking in surges of fire; ah, what will be their sensations then? O sinners, if you will believe God in season, now is your time to avoid the terrors of that day. Seize the ark and make sure of Ararat. By all the solemnities of that coming scene I entreat, I beseech you to hasten into the ark. Come, for the floods are rising. Come quickly, or the next hour may be too late.

SERMON IV.

A FRIEND CLOSER THAN A BROTHER.

PROV. XVIII. 27.

A man that hath friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

It is a law of the physical world that a particle of matter which is not attracted to others, cannot attract others to itself. A similar law prevails in the social world. The Ishmael whose hand is against every man, will find every man's hand against him. One of the few things in which mankind are agreed, is to detest the wretch who loves none but himself. This indeed is no more than just: for who has a right to claim more than he is willing to render? "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." To such a one the willing tribute of love is paid. The man whose heart can melt at others' woes, whose hand is ready to relieve their wants, whose life is devoted to offices of kindness,—though envy and hatred of the truth may create him ene-

mies, will always have friends. Two virtuous minds of kindred tempers, are susceptible of a union more tender and indissoluble than that which is formed by nature. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Such a friendship subsisted between Jonathan and David. But turn your eyes to Calvary, and behold a greater than a Jonathan is here. Here more than any where else is seen the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." This is the friend to whom I would call your attention. And in doing this I shall,

I. Describe this friend.

II. Show that he *is* such a friend.

III. Prove that we must show ourselves friendly if we would enjoy his friendship.

IV. Consider our need of him.

I. I am to describe this friend.

But who is equal to this task? Happy is the man who, by the power of faith, can form even a faint conception of his glories. Millions of ages hence the highest seraph will not have completed the discovery of these.

To form any just conception of his character we must contemplate him as God, as man, and as Mediator. He was one of the eternal Persons of the Godhead, co-equal with the Father; and yet he became truly man by being personally united with a human body and soul. By forming this union, and by sustaining an agency wholly distinct from that of the Father, (as distinct as that of an appeasing Mediator from that of an offended Sovereign,) and by bringing out the distinct agency of the Spirit in

the work of conviction and sanctification, and by frequently applying to the three, in the language and hearing of men, the three personal pronouns, he revealed the great mystery of the Trinity, which could not have been brought to light by any other conceivable means.

As a man he was marked by a supreme regard for his Father's glory, unerring obedience to his commands, perfect submission to his will, self-denial, patience, and fortitude that knew no bounds; gentleness, meekness, and humility; unconquerable love to men with a godlike faithfulness to reprove their vices; unwearied labors for their instruction and reformation; the most compassionate toils to heal the sick, to raise the dead, and to cast out devils; sometimes weeping over Jerusalem; full of devotion;—spending whole nights in prayer upon the bleak mountains, and sometimes rejoicing in spirit and saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes." Not a human excellence that shone not perfect and unrivalled in him.

As Mediator he came to reveal God to the creation and to fill the universe with his glory. And "the glory of God" which shines "in the face of Jesus Christ," in other words, which is displayed in the person and work of the Saviour, is the principal glory which God has ever set before the eyes of creatures. One part of this revelation consists in the instruction which Christ imparts as a Prophet, comprehending all that has come, from the begin-

ning of the world, through patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and a Gospel ministry.

As a Priest he came to promote the cause of holiness among a universe of creatures throughout eternity. He came to "magnify the law and make it honorable," and to give energy to a moral government by supporting the empire of a moral law. This he did by obeying that law under circumstances the most trying,—obeying it "unto death, even the death of the cross." When he says in reference to his death, "This commandment have I received of my Father," he alludes to no precept distinct from the moral law; for that law which requires us to "love the Lord" our "God with all" the "heart" and our "neighbor as" ourselves, binds us, when the providence of God renders it necessary, "to lay down our lives for the brethren." This obedience, by which he earned, and received as his own reward, all the positive blessings intended for Adam's race, gave God an opportunity to bestow all positive good as the reward of a perfect obedience to his law, and to refuse to grant the least blessing on any other terms. This had been the rule of Eden and of heaven; for in both cases the least transgression forfeited every blessing. And the adherence to this rule prevented "one jot or one tittle" of the law from being given up. But the chief support yielded to the law was by his sufferings and death in our stead, by which he answered all the purposes of our punishment and rendered the infliction no longer necessary. What is the design of punishment? It is to uphold the autho-

rity of the law by showing the unalterable determination of the lawgiver to execute its penalty on future offenders. And when the beloved Son of God took the place of sinners, and the Father would not spare him, but drained out his life to the very dregs, it showed the inflexible certainty of punishment, more than the eternal destruction of Adam's race would have done. It proclaimed in the ears of heaven and earth, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" This was the atonement.

But the enemies of the atonement profanely say, that his death was designed merely to confirm his doctrines. What then is the meaning of texts like these, which cover the pages of the Old Testament and the New? "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.—He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.—The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.—For the transgression of my people was he stricken.—When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.—He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.—By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities.—He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors." "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people,—to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.—And after three score

and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." "He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.—For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Indeed if the death of Christ had no other use than to confirm his doctrines, what can be the meaning of that whole system of typical, vicarious, and atoning sacrifices which are set forth in the Old Testament, and constantly displayed in every part of the worship of the Hebrew Church for near fifteen hundred years? When a man had sinned, he brought his victim to the altar, whose life was accepted in the room of his life, and the sinner lived. This was expressly called an atonement. The word is every where applied to the sacrifices of the ancient Church. And what could be meant when the high priest brought the scape-goat, and laid both his hands upon his head, and confessed "over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them

upon the head of the goat and" sending "him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness;" the goat, as it is expressly said, bearing "upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited?"

Having thus fulfilled the office of a Priest in the outer tabernacle, Christ entered into the inner sanctuary "to appear in the presence of God for us;" and there "he ever liveth to make intercession for" us.

He ascended also to reign as a King over the Church and over the universe;—to take the charge of the sanctification and protection of his people, to employ angels to minister to them, to curb and counteract the rage of devils, to manage the whole world in reference to their interests, and to bring them safely home to glory. Thus he administers the divine government in a Person that can be seen and apprehended by creatures. That same Person will judge the world. And "when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," he then will deliver "up the kingdom to God, even the Father,—that God may be all in all."

In his whole mediatorial character he is "the chiefest among ten thousand" and "altogether lovely." In him the lost and helpless children of Adam have precisely what they need. Not a want can be named but he has enough to supply it. Are you dead in trespasses and sins? He that called Lazarus from the sepulchre can reanimate you. Are you fast bound in the snares of Satan? He that could expel seven devils from one and a legion from another, can deliver you. Are you mourning un-

der guilt? He who bore your sins in his own body on the tree, can make your scarlet stains as snow and your crimson spots like wool. Do you complain of a heart of stone? He that could subdue a Saul of Tarsus, can soften you. Are you blind to spiritual glory? He who restored sight to the blind men of Jericho, can make you see. Do you groan under ignorance and confusion of thought respecting the way of salvation? He who composed the madness of the men among the tombs,—who brought so many bewildered Jews to clear conceptions of Gospel truth,—who has sent forth all the light which for six thousand years has cheered the abodes of Zion, can dispel your confusion and change your darkness into day. Are you falling before your spiritual enemies? He nailed them all to his cross and triumphed over them when he arose.

Poor, helpless, diseased mortals, come and hear the joyful tidings, that an all-sufficient Saviour is provided, at whose word guilt, diseases and demons fly; who restores the whole man,—eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, light to the bewildered, and life to the dead. There is balm in Gilead and an able physician there: O that you would go to him and be healed.

II. I am to show that he is a friend which sticketh closer than a brother.

But where shall I begin or where shall I end? His whole Gospel is one unequalled expression of kindness for a dying world. The tenderest assurances of his love are enstamped on every page. Nor has he stopped at mere professions. His con-

duct has uniformly proved him sincere. His descent from infinite glory to the manger, proved him sincere. His incessant toil for the instruction of his enemies, proved him sincere. His agony and bloody sweat in the garden, proved him sincere. His sufferings upon the cross, the effusion from his bleeding heart, every crimson nail print, his dying prayer for his enemies, all proved him to be a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Where is the brother who would lose his own to save a brother's life? Where is the brother who, from a self-existent God, ever descended into the fetters of death, that his unfriendly brother might live forever? Do you ask for further proof? Follow him then to the empyreal heavens: see him interceding for a world that had rejected him and chased him back to glory. See him showing the prints of his wounds and pleading, Father spare them, I have died. Do you wish for more? Listen then to the tones of entreaty with which he follows a world stained with his blood. "O my people, what have I done unto thee and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness?" "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace." "As I live—I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye,—for why will ye die?" "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?"

Not the vilest sinners are excepted in his invitations and entreaties. Methinks I hear him say, Ho ye my abusers and murderers who spit in my face and nailed me to the cross, come and taste the fruits of the sufferings your own hands inflicted. Come, thou that didst pierce my side, and let the very sin which forced the blood to flow, find in that blood its purification and pardon.

Nor does he give over his suit when all the calls of his word are rejected. He comes again to earth in the person of his Spirit, and renews his entreaties at the sinner's door. "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me." "Open to me,—for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Will the master whom thou servest reward thee as I would do? Has he done for thee what I have done? Did he ever for thee become "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"? From the tenderest love to thee I left the honors of my Father's house to suffer and die on Calvary. And now my bowels of mercy have brought me to thy door to plead with thee to be happy. I have no unfriendly designs against thee; I only seek thy peace. And wilt thou spurn me from thee to admit another who only seeks thy hurt? Have I deserved such treatment at thy hands? O sinner, have I thus treated thee?

And is he not "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother"?

III. If we would enjoy his friendship we must show ourselves friendly.

In the nature of things it is impossible for us to enjoy the good which he came to purchase, while we are his enemies. How can we have communion with him and his Father while in such a state? How in such a state can we love and obey that law which he came to support, and enjoy that holy order which he came to establish? How can one relish the religious society of heaven while disgusted with religious society on earth? or the sacredness of an eternal sabbath, to whom every sabbath is a burden? or the holy employments of the upper sanctuary, when prayer and all religious exercises are irksome?

And if it were otherwise, is it *reasonable* that the Son of God should exercise love for us while we refuse to make him any returns? that he should lay down his life for us, while we refuse to lay aside even our sins for him? What are we that we should expect so much more from him than we are willing to render? Can he discover more beauty in us than we can in him? Has he more need of our friendship than we have of his? Can we reward his attention as he can ours?

At any rate the explicit terms of the Gospel exclude all who are not from the heart the friends of Christ and of God. "Follow—holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned." "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be

Anathema Maranatha." "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you,—when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." "The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "Then shall he say also unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every man, according to their works.—And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

Universalists, especially those who deny *any* punishment after death, would make out that Christ came to take the part of men while trampling under foot the law of God, and to shield them while riot-

ing in that rebellion. But upon this principle he came, not to magnify the law, but to ruin it; not to sustain a moral government, but to destroy it; not to glorify God, but to tarnish the divine glory forever. But it is not so. He that would have this Friend must "show himself friendly." This is settled, and it leads us to consider,

IV. Our absolute need of him.

We need him as a Prophet to prevent us, by his instructions, from falling into fatal errors of doctrine, and from embracing that delusive hope which, instead of being "an anchor" to keep us from the tossings of the tempest, is an anchor which, grasped by the drowning man, holds him down to death.

We need him as an atoning and interceding Priest. Could a perishing world have been saved without that propitiatory sacrifice, he who made the heavens would not have consented to die the death of a Roman malefactor. He was not so lavish of his blood as to spend it without necessity. Do you doubt the need of his atonement? How then are you to be saved? Millions of transgressions, each of which is loaded with the curse of the law, stand charged against you. The measure of your guilt cannot be calculated by angels. By what means then can you hope to make atonement? Should you henceforth yield perfect obedience, you would only do your duty for the time to come. There would be no surplusage of merit to make up for past deficiencies. What then can be hoped from that *imperfect* obedience which is the utmost that is

rendered by the best of men? This instead of atoning for what is past, needs an atonement for itself. And even this imperfect obedience will not be rendered without help from Christ. Unless he, by his Spirit, work "in you both to will and to do," you will retain that "carnal mind" which is "enmity against God,"—that "heart" which "is fully set" in you "to do evil." Talk not of your selfish reformations and prayers. For even these are not likely to be produced without the convicting Spirit; and if produced, are only "the sacrifice of the wicked." Thus every hope of making atonement is withered; and nothing remains for you but to lie down in everlasting sorrows, or depend entirely on the atonement of Christ.

You also need Jesus as a King, to sanctify and subdue you. You need him, first, to interpose by his awakening influence, to prevent you from sleeping life away. And when reflection is awakened, you need him to slay the enmity of your heart and to impress his image there. And after all this is effected, you will daily need his sanctifying grace to keep you from apostacy. You need the Captain of the Lord's host to protect you against your spiritual enemies. You have the world with all its frowns, and what is more, with all its seductive blandishments, to encounter. You have the flesh with all its importunate lusts. And you have to contend with principalities and powers. Hosts of infuriated enemies stand crowded in all the way to heaven. The ascent is arduous. Your own nature is of the earth earthy, and strongly gravitates

downwards. These enemies have long been entrenching themselves in the way, and some of their spies are lodged in your very bosom, waiting for a favorable opportunity to betray you into their hands. Thus beset from without and from within, you may well say with the good Jehoshaphat, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." Your enemies not only assault you openly, but lurk in secret ambuscades, whence they shoot their silent arrows, which, without alarming, destroy. Their shafts are barbed and hard to be extracted. They are tipped with poison, and give those deadly wounds which nothing can heal but the balm of Gilead and the great Physician of souls.

You will greatly need this friend in the gloomy shades of adversity. None can hope to see many days on earth without being conversant with scenes of affliction. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Disappointments and crosses will come; infirmities and pains will assail; the friends of our heart will close their dying eyes on our tears, and, deaf to all our lamentations, will hide themselves under the clods of the valley. At such times we shall greatly need "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" a friend who, when "father and mother forsake" us, will kindly "take" us "up." If such a friend is not secured, we are poorly fitted to traverse the mazes of this thorny wilderness.

And when these mazes are past, we shall greatly need this friend in a dying hour. O unbeliever, when you lie gasping on that edge of time which divides the two worlds, looking back with remorse and forward with terror, about to take the fearful plunge whence there is no return; when you shall cry to your vicious companions, and in answer only see their faces pale with terror,—and extend your hands to a weeping parent and brother, and read in their tears, "Dear, dying friend, we cannot help thee;" then how greatly will you need that friend which sticketh closer than a brother. How sweet would it be in that hour to see him standing by your side, supporting your weary head, and ready to bear you in his arms to the heavenly rest. But in that extremity, to find no friend in heaven or earth to speak a healing word; to go unbefriended and alone through the gloomy valley, without one ray of light to point the way to glory; this indeed would be distress unspeakable. How would it then seem to hear Jesus say, "I would have been thy friend, but thou wouldst not receive me. And now, though thou call, I will not answer. Get thee to thine idols for help. Cry to thine own chosen master, whom thou didst prefer to me; and see whether he will do better by thee than I would have done." O it cannot, must not be endured.

Another day will come when you will equally need his friendship; a day when "the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll," the earth shall be on fire, the trump shall sound, the dead shall rise, the

Son of man, with his angels, shall descend, and three worlds shall be assembled at his bar. No longer a weeping infant in the manger, or a bleeding sufferer on the cross; no longer an humble suitor at the door of your hearts, he appears the sovereign Judge, arrayed in all the glories of the Godhead. No longer is his blood to be slighted, his Spirit resisted, and his sacred person insulted by an ungrateful world. For different purposes has he made his second appearance; to judge the world, to call sinners to a strict account, to scrutinize every action and thought from Adam to his youngest son, and to execute the long delayed sentence of his righteous law. Then, when all your sins shall be displayed before assembled worlds, and the curse fastened to each shall be ready to fall upon your defenceless head, and nothing to arrest the rushing war but the mediatorial shield, and your earthly friends unable to help either you or themselves; then will you in the fullest sense, though alas too late, feel your need of that friend which sticketh closer than a brother. You would then give ten thousand worlds for that interest in him which you now refuse.

And will your need of him end here? No, it will continue to all eternity. When friends and riches and honors and pleasures shall be no more; when for former comforts shall be substituted the torments of the never dying worm,—a conscience lashing you with torturing reproaches, a memory furnishing the most poignant stings, and your passions, let loose, shall rend you with the fury of

whirlwinds; when you shall look up and behold some of your former friends in heaven, regaling themselves at the immortal banquet, while you pine in eternal want; then will you "mourn at the last, when" your "flesh and" your "body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof!"

O sinners, I adjure you in the name of God, not to treat this warning as you have treated all that are past. Retire to your closets and let these solemn realities pass in review before you. Place yourselves before the bar of God, and anticipate the awful scenes of the final judgment. Ponder upon your guilt: look at the readiness of Christ to save you, and let the charming echo of his invitations still sound in your ears. And at the conclusion solemnly ask yourselves, Why will I die? O wretched men, are not the glories of heaven worth a few serious thoughts? If you could continue blind forever, I should not be so importunate. But light will break in upon your anguished sight: and those lids which were obstinately closed, will be forced and held open to gaze at the tormenting glare of light while God and truth remain. O reflect before reflection shall come too late. Why should you exchange your souls for toys, your God for mammon, and your glory for despair? Why should the great enemy of man be served for the recompense of damnation, rather than this divine friend for the reward of heaven? Should you, after so long a time, resolve this day to take the

counsel now offered, do you think you would repent it in a dying hour? Would you repent it at the judgment day, or in any one moment of your immortal existence? I can say no more. "If thou be wise thou shalt be wise for thyself; but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it." Amen.

SERMON V.

CHRIST A COVERT FROM THE TEMPEST.

ISAI. XXXII. 2.

And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

This prediction, which was uttered in the days of Ahaz, is thought to have had primary reference to Hezekiah, and to the relief from wicked magistrates which would be experienced in his reign. But in the opinion of the best commentators it had ultimate reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the person of our Redeemer, who is very man as well as God, it is fulfilled that "a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

In a serene day when no wind is up, when no rain is falling, a man may see by the way-side a shelving rock and may pass by it without emotion.

Not so the weary traveller who is fleeing before the rising storm or the beating tempest. In a season of rain or in a land of waters, one may pass by a river with little interest. Not so a traveller in the Arabian deserts, surrounded with burning sands, fainting with heat and parched with thirst. The sight of a stream of water, and especially of "rivers of water," in such a place, would transport him. In a country covered with wood or pinched with cold, a huge rock might offer its shade unwelcome; but amidst the parched wastes of Arabia, where the weary traveller, exposed all day to the intense heat of a vertical sun, sees not a tree nor a shrub, but only one boundless waste of burning sand,—*there* a cool retreat beneath the shade of an over-hanging cliff,—*there* "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," would be most welcome.

These observations suggest a principal reason why the Saviour of the world, whose very name ought to be music to every human ear, is treated with such cruel indifference by the greater part of mankind. It is because they do not feel their guilt and misery and need of a Saviour. They are blind to the infinite majesty and holiness and loveliness of God, and to the immense obligations by which they are bound to him; and therefore they do not see the infinite guilt of rebelling against all his commands, all his mercies, all his glories and interests; and therefore they are not pressed down under a sense of their awful condemnation and ruin. Hell is not laid open before them as their proper punishment. They do not stand amazed at the patience

which has kept them out of it so long. They do not see themselves to be utterly ruined, and utterly helpless and hopeless without a Saviour. And therefore his precious Gospel, which ought to fill the world with wonder and delight, with gratitude and praise, is cast aside as an idle tale, and the name of Jesus is treated with the most dreadful indifference.

But let a man be thoroughly convicted of sin; let him see himself covered with pollution from the head to the foot; let him stand in sight of the eternal judgment, and apprehend that divine justice has no choice but to crush him into everlasting torment; let him see himself just about to receive the descending wrath of God with the weight of a thousand worlds: in that awful moment let him obtain a glimpse of Jesus, who came to "save his people from their sins;" let him lift his trembling eye to a God reconciled in Christ and smiling upon him: I ask that man, "What" now "think" you "of Christ?" O, says he,—but language fails. A sacred reverence settles upon his countenance; his uplifted eye speaks unutterable things. I see it glisten,—I see it weep. O, says he.—His hands are clinched and forcibly raised to his breast. The opening of the last judgment could not add solemnity to a single feature. O the height and the depth, the length and the breadth of the love of Christ! Where has this glorious mystery lain hid that I have never seen it before? To such an eye how precious does the Saviour appear as the great medium through which the love of God has come down to

men,—as the Word by which all the wonders of the eternal Mind are expressed,—as the great Prophet who has brought down all the instructions that have blessed the world from the days of Eden,—as the Priest whose atonement and intercession have astonished heaven and earth,—as the King who has governed the world from the beginning, and has always protected and provided for his people, and has all their interests in his hands, and all the treasures of the universe to impart. To one who is indifferent to the blessedness of communion with God and of conformity to him, there appears no form or comeliness in Christ why he should desire him. But to one who feels an insatiable eagerness to rise from this dark world to a knowledge of all the grand and interesting things which are taking place in the kingdom of God,—who longs to be united to all holy beings, and to share in their immortal friendship and blessedness and honors,—who has no desire so great as to be good and conformed to the God he loves;—to such a one Jesus must appear exceedingly precious as the one appointed to open the universe to view, to pour all its light upon the eye, and to exalt the soul to all its purity, to all its dignity, to all its happiness.

To an anxious and afflicted soul the Saviour appears peculiarly interesting in the light in which he is exhibited in the text. In the charming simplicity of eastern figure, he is presented "as a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Here are three

separate figures, very striking to an eastern ear, which admit of distinct illustrations.

"A hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest." This is but one figure: for the latter clause, as is common in eastern poetry, is only the echo of the former; presenting a hiding place and covert from the windy storm and tempest. Jesus is found to be the best hiding place and covert from the winds and tempests of *affliction*. A poor disconsolate soul, after it has been chased through the world by the frowns of pursuing fortune,—after it has been hunted from place to place, and not suffered to rest in any corner of creation,—will find in Christ that protection and repose which all other places denied it. The weather-beaten wretch, after bearing the storms of this inclement world through the long night of affliction, may find in him a shelter under which he may hear the tempest howl without, and feel it not.

Jesus is the best hiding place and covert from the tempest of an *agitated conscience*. When the lightning of conviction flashes upon the soul, and guilt with its thundering voice spreads its dark folds over the mind, no where but in Jesus can be found a covert from the bursting storm. To what other refuge can a sinner fly when the horrid nature of his rebellion is laid open before him? At what time his ingratitude to the God that made, redeemed and preserves him appears; at what time he is terrified and confounded by the frequent repetition of his sins and the obstinacy of his corruptions; at what time guilt, superadded to guilt, rolls its dark wreaths

over the soul, like clouds that "return after the rain," no where but in Jesus can he find a refuge from the gathering tempest. The blood of Christ, sprinkling his conscience from dead works, has a wonderful power to relieve from the pangs of conscious guilt. It is the most sovereign balm to a wounded spirit. "Give me Jesus or I die," cries the agonized soul. "None but Christ, none but Christ. Take away that cloud that I may see him, and I shall live." What other refuge *can* a soul find that is racked with guilt? Let him go to his wealth, his honors, his pleasures; they are all unsavory ashes in the mouth of a man dying with hunger. Let him go to philosophy, it is a stranger to his case, and knows nothing either of his griefs or his wants. Let him go to speculative divinity, it is no physician, but only a corpse laid by the side of a dying man. Let him go to the courts of the Lord,—let him go to his Bible, to his knees, and all without Christ are nothing. Let him go to God, and God out of Christ "is a consuming fire." But let him only come in sight of Jesus, and get near enough to "touch" if it be but "the hem of his garment," and all his pains are instantly relieved,—the fire in his conscience is quenched, and he is as much at ease as though he never felt a pain.

Jesus is also the best covert from the tempest of *fear* when it agitates the soul. There is a material difference between conscious guilt and the apprehension of punishment, although, like light and heat, they generally go together. I see a sinner convulsed with the fear of a judgment to come.

With an eye wildly rolling and marked with horror, I hear him cry, "Who" can dwell with—devouring fire? who" can inhabit "everlasting burnings?" His anxious eye looks above and beneath and searches creation through, but not a ray of hope can it find,—nothing but clouds and darkness and tempests. At length it falls on Jesus. Instantly the heavens are calm; the sound of the distant storm dies upon his soothed ear, and every care is still.

Jesus is the only hiding-place from the tempest of *divine wrath*. A rock of adamant he stood, and suffered this storm to spend its force on him; while his people, enclosed "in him," lay hid from the beating tempest. The storm is past, and now their faith looks abroad and sees an unclouded sky, and all nature smiling in fresher beauties than though no storm had been.

To finish the illustration of this figure, Jesus is the only hiding-place from the storms and tempests which *forever beat vpon the regions of the damned*. Not to *them* is he a covert. They rejected the canopy of his grace when he would willingly have spread it over them; and now he is nothing to them. But to his own dear people, he will forever be a covert from the hail which will eternally lash the howling millions of the damned.

It is time to make a transition to the next figure. "As rivers of water in a dry place." The most obvious idea on the face of this figure is, that Jesus conveys *satisfaction* and *refreshment* to those who can find them no where else. There is a thirst for

happiness in the soul of man, but there is a drought in all things but in God,—and for *human* souls, a drought in all things but in the God that shines "in the face of Jesus Christ." Such is the constitution of things, that no man can find satisfaction but in the Christ of God. Nor will any ever find it there but those who despair of finding it any where else. But "when the *poor* and *needy* seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water." When one has ranged creation through in search of happiness; has sought it in the field and in the city, in the haunts of business and in the circles of pleasure,—and has met with nothing but disappointment and rebuffs; when he has wandered restless from scene to scene, from employment to employment, perhaps from country to country; when, a pilgrim in the deserts of life, he finds himself "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is," and faints to think that happiness is no where to be found; then the Gospel meets him and thus accosts him: Wherefore seekest thou "the living among the dead?" It is not here. Return from thine idle pursuit. There is but one point whence refreshment can come. Lift thine eyes to the Saviour of sinners. He lifts his eyes; he lifts his heart; and finds "waters" breaking out "in the wilderness—and streams in the desert." Ah,

says he, this is where I should have come before. It would have saved me many sore disappointments and many years of anguish.

When one is plucked and crushed by the hand of adversity,—has found nothing but grief and perplexity in his connexion with the world,—carries the aching wounds where friends that have been torn away once grew to his heart,—mourns alone without father or mother, without brother or sister, without wife or child,—unpitied by the crowd of strangers that gaze upon him and pass him by,—while his tattered garments remind him of better days;—I hasten to the turf where he sits weeping, and gently, (lest I should alarm the ear of grief,) say to him, Hath no man pitied thee? Ah, says he, I am "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is;" no satisfaction or refreshment for a wretch crushed beneath misfortune. From my soul I pity you, but do not despair. Let me lead you to the mourner's Friend. I bring him to Jesus: and when I see the balm applied to his wounds, and the countenance of the sufferer beginning to brighten, I bow and take my leave, and return to my house with delicious sensations that an infidel never knew.

Here is another pressed under a sense of heavy guilt. He also is in a land where no water is. He has sought on all sides for relief, but sought in vain. His thirst is for reconciliation with God. In quest of this he has applied to external reformation, to outward duties, to the means of grace. He has sought the counsel of ministers and christians, and has tried to repose on the good opinions of others.

He has made the desperate attempt to rest on universalism, and even on infidelity; but all to no purpose. The fever of his mind remains. His thirst for pardon and peace is unabated; but no where can he find any thing to allay it, till at last he approaches the Gospel. He hears it say, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." His attention is strongly arrested. He examines the passage. It is the voice of the Saviour himself. He ultimately seizes the invitation and goes to him: and his astonished soul finds this way of salvation exactly suited to his wants. He finds within "him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The last figure employed, though appropriate and striking, conveys no meaning materially different from the other two. The idea is that of *rest in a cool and refreshing place.* "As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The figure represents a traveller in one of the eastern deserts, burnt with intense heat, worn out with toil, fainting for water, for shade. His resolution and strength fail. He abandons the hope of ever reaching the end of the desert; when all at once he discovers before him a high impending rock, under the cavity of whose side he finds a refreshing shelter from the scorching sun and burning sand. Such a retreat does our dear Redeemer afford to those who are fainting under the labors and discouragements of this wearisome life. This vale of tears may well be called a weary land. There are many in it who are ready to faint under the load of affliction, and can say with Job, "My soul is weary of my life." Many

are weary of sin,—wearied out with a long course of painful struggles with the world, the flesh, and the devil,—are often discouraged with the greatness of the contest, and sink under the apprehension that they shall never get through with safety. These evils press them so hard that they often sigh for the grave where the weary are at rest. But a nearer and more delightful retreat is to be found in him who says, "The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul." When his Church wandered forty years in the Arabian wilderness, among burning sands, without a shelter or a shade, he covered them by day with a pillar of cloud. What this was intended to signify, appears from the application made of it by the prophet: "The Lord shall create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and a smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a *defence*. And there shall be a tabernacle *for a shadow in the day time from the heat*, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm and from the rain."

At what time a poor fainting soul, weary of affliction, weary of sin, weary of temptation, casts itself under the shadow of this rock, he feels a sensation of relief which nothing else can bring and which none can fully describe.

My brethren, what everlasting thanks do we owe to God for providing such a refuge from the beating

tempest,—such rivers of refreshment in a dry and thirsty land. What *could* the weather-beaten pilgrim, what could the faint and weary traveller do without them in such a world as this? How greatly does this view tend to endear the Saviour to us. What new motives rush upon the mind to *abide in him*, that we may every hour enjoy a "hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest,"—that we may constantly lie at the fountain of living waters, and feel the permanent shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Why do the people of God find so little relief from the distresses of life and the troubles of conscience, but because they abide no more in their everlasting refuge?

How surprising it is that in a world where a covert from the tempest is so much needed, it is so much neglected, and that even by those who have often found it a shelter when every other refuge failed. Would it not be strange to see a person ready to die with heat and thirst by the very side of a cooling fountain, and by the shade of an overhanging rock? Yet a still greater wonder is witnessed here.

May not these sweet and heavenly truths be allowed to "light up a smile in the aspect of wo?" Will not mourners in Zion come to this refuge and dry up their tears? Were you confined to these stormy regions without a shelter, you might well beat your breasts like one distracted. But now what need? I am speaking to those who know the truth of what I say. You have often found refuge here. and seen the agitations of the tempest com-

posed, and all the fury of the storm appeased. The same shelter is ever at hand and is always offered to you; and at what time you are afraid you may always find in Christ a sure retreat. What occasion have you then for these desponding griefs? What abundant reason have you to "rejoice evermore." And while we thus enjoy the blessed fruits of a Saviour's dying love, let our souls arise and praise him; let a thousand tender recollections rise up in our hearts; let us renewedly devote ourselves to his service, resolving to live to his glory and to die with an eye fixed upon his cross. Amen.

SERMON VI.

THE HIGH PRIEST.

HEB. VII. 26.

For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

When believers get to heaven, much of their happiness will arise from views of Christ which they will wonder they did not more fully possess on earth. Their most ravishing views will be those of his priestly office. Any being, (had wisdom so appointed,) might have instructed the world as a prophet, and perhaps governed it as a king; but to bring a guilty race to God by sacrifice and intercession, this is the mystery into which the angels desire to look. A cordial belief of this is the principal attribute of saving faith.

Probably the priesthood of Christ is not sufficiently dwelt upon in the contemplations of christians or in the preaching of ministers. Some are always poring upon divine government; others,

upon the general grace of God to men, without considering the medium through which it comes. But the priesthood of Christ is so much the pivot on which the whole system of christianity turns, that it ought to hold a conspicuous place in the religion of the Church. Great stress is laid upon it in the writings of the apostles. At every turn they introduce it as the only basis of the christian's hope. This is the case especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This Epistle was addressed to the Israelites who were strongly attached to the law of Moses, and was designed to remove that attachment by showing them that the rites connected with the Levitical priesthood were only types of what Christ was to perform in his pontifical character. Thus these types not only prefigured to the *Jews* a Saviour to come, but are made to assist the weak apprehensions of *Christians* to the end of the world, and serve as steps by which they may climb to see the high and transcendent mysteries of the atonement. In this Epistle the most remarkable and instructive types are pressed into the service of the christian church, and are employed to illustrate a point so difficult of apprehension as the office work of our great high priest.

Aaron was the high priest of one nation; Christ is the high priest of a world. It belonged to the Jewish high priest to instruct the people; and Christ, as a prophet, instructs the world. It belonged to the Jewish high priest to rule over the house of God; and Christ is exalted to dominion over the church and over the universe. The names of the

twelve tribes were engraven on the stones of the ephod and borne upon the shoulders of the high priest; and Christ supports his people with a strength that never tires. But the more appropriate business of the Jewish high priest was to appease the wrath of God by sacrifice and intercession. Let us trace a little more particularly the resemblance between the type and the antitype in this and other respects.

1. It was a circumstance of vital importance that the Jewish high priest was not self-appointed, but ordained of God. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." As the Jewish high priest was divinely appointed, it happened of course that when he offered sacrifice and intercession for the people, God accepted the offering, and in his providence treated the people like a Father. This was the sure effect of his being ordained of God. But this circumstance gives still greater confidence in the case of Christ; "inasmuch as *not without an oath* he was made priest. For those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord swore and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." By a similar oath God has confirmed the promise to the church. "For when God made promise to Abraham, [of the blessings which

should come to the world through his Seed,] because he could swear by no greater he swore by himself;—that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

The appointment of Christ to the priestly office was then God's own act, confirmed by an oath. We may therefore be assured that it will answer the purpose, and that his offering as a priest will certainly be accepted in behalf of all who believe. If we cannot see the ends which are answered by this substitution, we may rest assured that God had fully weighed every circumstance before he ordained his Son to the office and swore to accept his offering. If we cannot apprehend, can we not believe God?

2. The Jewish high priest was not of a foreign world or nation, but a brother of the same flesh and blood with those for whom he mediated. And he could "have compassion on the ignorant and on them that" were "out of the way, for that he himself also" was "compassed with infirmity." And Christ, that he might suffer in the nature that had sinned, and that he might know by experience how to sympathize with us in all our trials, "took not on him the nature of angels, but—the seed of Abraham." "Forasmuch—as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them.—In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might

be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

3. The Jewish high priest, when he came before God, must wash himself in water, and put on clean raiment, and offer only those victims which were without blemish. And "such a high priest became *us*, who is holy, harmless, undefiled," and "separate from sinners." Had he been otherwise, for the same reason that divine purity could not receive a sinful world without a high priest, it must have rejected such a high priest and his offering. His wonderful filial obedience, which rendered him infinitely dear to the Father, was not only needful for his atonement, as it made the stroke which fell on him far more expressive, but it earned the whole inheritance, which he now holds as "the first born among many brethren," for the benefit of the "joint heirs."

4. The Jewish high priest was clothed with great dignity, which was set forth by his wonderfully rich and dazzling robes. And "such a high priest became us, who is—made higher than the heavens;" not only exalted, as a reward, to the management and distribution of the whole estate, (which was of vital importance,) but exalted in his own divine nature above all heights. It would not have answered

for an angel to have undertaken to mediate. It required a sacrifice infinitely dear to the Father to make an expression, as strong as the eternal destruction of Adam's race would have done, that God was determined to execute the penalty of his law on future offenders. We indeed wanted a high priest in our own nature, that we might be united to him as a brother, and be emboldened to apply to him, and that by experiencing our trials, he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. But we wanted a high priest of infinite dignity, that his mediation might prevail. These wide extremes meet in the person of our Redeemer. We see him supporting John on his laboring bosom, conversing and weeping with his disciples; we are emboldened to embrace him. We look again, and this compassionate Saviour is expanded into infinity; and we can now trust him to advocate our cause with the Father and to manage all our interests in both worlds.

5. The most important work of the Jewish high priest was to offer sacrifice for sin; and that picture of the great substitution was so formed as to set forth the antitype in a very familiar and impressive light: and the manner in which this picture is explained by the Holy Ghost in this very Epistle, renders the whole most intelligible and affecting. It is here said, "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves

with better sacrifices than these." "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." The lasting efficacy of his one offering and the eternity of his priesthood are strongly set forth in contrast with the insufficiency and consequent repetition of the typical offerings and the change of the typical priesthood from hand to hand. Having no other use than to prefigure a Priest and an atonement to come, these last had the same need of being repeated that our sacraments have which point to a Saviour already come. "The law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never—make the comers thereunto perfect: for then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins.—But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." "Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice;" "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."

6. Another part of the business of the Jewish high priest was to intercede for the people. On

the twelve stones of his breast-plate were engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; and these he bore upon his heart when he appeared before God. So "Christ is—entered—into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," bearing all his people upon his heart. "Wherefore he is able—to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." There he stands to introduce our confessions and our prayers to God. There he stands to introduce our free-will offerings of praise. It is repeatedly asserted in this Epistle that the Jewish high priest offered "both gifts and sacrifices." These *gifts*, which were presented by the people and offered by the priest, were designed for thanksgiving, and were commonly of the fruits of the earth; in allusion to which the apostle says, "By him—let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the *fruit* of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Our very praises are too polluted to be accepted till they are perfumed by the breath of the Intercessor.

The influence both of his intercession and atonement is remarkably set forth in the entrance of the high priest "into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the *true*," namely of that heaven into which Christ has entered "to appear in the presence of God for us." In that part of the tabernacle which lay within the vail, the Shekinah, or visible glory of God, sat enthroned on the mercy seat. So awful was the presence of a holy God, that no mortal eye but that of the high priest might

ever pass the vail, nor his except on one day in a year: and then he must first wash himself with water, and put on clean linen garments, and slay his sin-offerings, and carry their blood in to sprinkle the mercy seat. And he must take a censor full of live coals in one hand, and sweet incense in the other; and the moment he passed the vail, he must put the incense upon the coals, that the smoke might conceal the glory of the great and dreadful God from his view: for if his polluted eyes once fell upon the Shekinah, that moment he must die. So solemn a thing it was to approach a holy God. By this shutting up of the inner tabernacle the Holy Ghost signified "that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while—the first tabernacle was yet standing;" that is to say, while the vail remained which was a type of Christ's flesh, by the rending of which flesh the vail was taken away. At his death the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; by which was signified that the way to God and the mercy seat was then opened. Without that atonement God was a consuming fire, and to approach him was instant death. "But Christ being come, a high priest of good things to come" not "by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood—entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.—Having therefore—*boldness* to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us *through the vail, that is to say, his flesh;* and having a high priest over the house of God; let us

draw near—in full assurance of faith." We have now a hope "both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the Forerunner is for us entered," to open a way for us to God and to the heaven of heavens.

Of all divine truths the priesthood of Christ is the one of most difficult apprehension. It is a truth not only which reason could not have discovered, but which lies the most remote from the apprehension of reason. Flesh and blood cannot reveal it to the soul. Nothing can but that divine illumination which accompanies faith. No reasoning on the necessity or nature of the atonement can bring the true sense. A child may have it, and a well read divine may want it. Christians do not obtain it by the niceties of speculation, but by a hearty belief in the testimony which God has given of his Son. We must credit that oath by which the Son was consecrated high priest forever. We must believe that God is sincere in all that he has spoken, and is not trifling with the miseries of a wretched world. We must obtain a sense of this glorious mystery, if I may so say, by the *passiveness of faith*,—by lying down on the word and oath of God. We may make researches, but reason should not go one step alone. The moment it attempts to do this, it degenerates into dark, frigid, proud speculation, unproductive, and even preventive, of the true sense. Much darkness, substantial enough to be moulded into form, appears in the shape of human systems. Would men assist their apprehensions of this matter by reading, let them look with a believ-

ing eye on those aspects which the priesthood of Christ assumes in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The representations of the Holy Ghost are better calculated to produce the true sense, than stiff, systematic phrases or artificial modes of thinking. The pencil of inspiration points more to the life. Without confining ourselves to streams which have gathered defilement in their course, we may here drink at the fountain. The Scriptures are wonderfully adapted to the weakness of our apprehensions and to the nature of the things expressed.

It is impossible to possess a right sense of the priesthood of Christ without a simultaneous view of the holiness of God, bringing with it a sense of our guilt and unfitness to make direct approaches to him. We must be convinced of these things before we can see the glory of such a high priest, and the most effectual means to produce this conviction is to consider, not so much what we have done, as what God is. When we discover God to be so holy and glorious that a bare neglect to love him deserves eternal wo, and that no conceivable punishment is great enough for those who sin against him;—when we view him turning the angels out of heaven for sin,—turning Adam out of Eden,—turning a beautiful world into a prison house of groans,—turning millions into hell,—and more than all, thrusting his sword through the heart of his own Son; then we discover the awful majesty of his holiness, and that to approach him without a Mediator is rushing into a consuming fire. We look anxiously about and ask, Where is Jesus now?

We espy him. We see him to be the very medium we want. We dare not move a wish but in his name. And now we cry with joys unknown before, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Well it is for me that there is one whom a holy God can accept in my behalf; for surely he could not accept me." Now it appears an unspeakable honor to the holiness of God that he will not accept sinners but through a Mediator. The priesthood of Christ is now seen to be a wondrous reality. All the supposed opposition between the Father and Son has disappeared. The Father, in appointing the high priest and in freely receiving sinners through him, appears as much the friend of man as does the Son; and the Son, in cheerfully undertaking a mediation so honorable to the divine holiness, appears as much the friend of holiness as does the Father. The suitableness of the priesthood is seen to arise from the unapproachable purity of God. On the other hand the purity of God is most clearly seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The soul has now no wish to take its own part, or that Christ should take its part, against the divine law. It as highly approves of the ground taken by the Father, as of that taken by the Son. It sees the plan of salvation to be glorious in all its parts, and wishes to be saved in no other way. It sees Christ to be a medium through which a whole world may come, and longs that all men should go to God by him. It feels secure, and sees that however vile it has been,

it may readily be accepted through Christ. It is amazed and delighted. It seems not to have wrought itself up to these feelings, but to lie still and receive them. The more unworthy it feels the happier it is, because the more it feels its unworthiness the more it relishes this glorious high priest; and on the other hand, the more it sees the glories of Christ, the more it feels its own pollution. It greatly wishes to recommend a holy God and Saviour to all, but is unable to express the sense it feels. It seems like one who has found a great treasure and wishes all men to partake. It is grieved that any should lose so much; and longs that every eye on earth should behold the glories of the Saviour, and that every heart should love and honor him. It sees that the kingdom is and ought to be the Lord's, and feels that the subjection of a single event to the decision of another would be unreasonable.

Under these views the christian feels that he is not his own but bought with a price, and longs to devote himself forever to the service of his God and Saviour. He is willing to bear reproaches and even to die for his name's sake. The seasons of worship which he enjoys, he values more as opportunities to honor God than as occasions of obtaining blessings for himself. He longs for clearer views. "O for more faith and less dependance on reason. Give me communion with Christ and I desire no more." He finds these views of a holy God and Saviour the most effectual antidote against sin, and sees that if sin is ever crucified it must be by the cross of Christ.

The priesthood of Christ, thus disclosed, is the sun which illumines every other subject;—the perfections of God, his love and mercy, his common bounties, our obligations to universal holiness, our ingratitude and guilt. Whichever way we turn, all is light around. The Bible, wherever it is opened, appears luminous. The world is full of matter to think of, to pray about, and to be thankful for. The mercies of God, swelled to an incalculable amount, appear most amazing; and the vanquished creature, unable to make any returns, puts himself down for an everlasting bankrupt.

He now discovers that it is a very different thing to approach God from what he formerly thought; that his sense of the atonement which had depended on former reasonings, was not the true sense; that it is one thing to talk about religion and another to feel it; that many truths which he had correctly expressed, are far different from what he had conceived them to be; and that in regard to others, he had not only conceived of them imperfectly, but expressed them awkwardly,—preserving a stiff, systematic form, and overlooking the life and soul of the things themselves.

These direct views of God and the glorious high priest, and none but these, can bring "the full assurance of hope." In them the believer sees a sufficient ground of everlasting confidence. Formerly his hope arose from meltings of soul, but now from an open view of God in Christ and from the truth of the everlasting covenant. He places unwavering confidence in the faithfulness of him in whom he

is now conscious of believing, and is sure of being guided by his counsel until he is received to glory.

"And am I chosen," says he, "by eternal love? Am I redeemed by blood and owned as a child? Are all my crimson stains washed out? Am I to reign on an eternal throne, while my companions in sin welter in hell? O grace, grace! O the ocean without a bottom or a shore!"

My brethren, how much calmer, brighter, happier our lives might pass in this communion with Christ and in this assurance of a blessed immortality, than by degenerating into pride and worldliness, filled with darkness and shaken with fears. How much better to be an humble, heavenly minded christian, dead to the world and bearing the cross, whatever mortifications it may bring, than to be a Cæsar in all his glory. Ah how different is religion from nature! How different is the sanctified from the unsanctified part in every feeling, view, motive, and motion!

This knowledge of Christ is most precious.—This to repentance from dead works, is what manhood is to infancy. How many, by frequently laying again the foundation of such repentance, are continued babes. Others get before them and are pressing towards the mark, while they are lagging far behind.

It is the cross of Christ that must crucify a wicked world. That is commonly the best preaching which has the most of Christ in it. Paul in his ministry knew nothing "save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And all preachers are to draw their

most powerful motives, and to draw them often, from the cross of Christ. But they need spiritual discernment to do this skilfully and with effect. Without this they will be in danger of speaking of these high and mysterious things in a manner either awkward and frigid, or light and frivolous. Before the uncovered majesty of these sublime and awful truths, how do the little arts of seizing the passions by loosely and lightly, and I had almost said, profanely, talking of Christ's scars and sighs, bow and flee away! In how unhallowed a manner, O my soul, hast thou treated this infinitely dignified, this holy and heavenly theme! We ought to bow in humble awe before the substance, and not be always playing with the shadows.

By this high priest all the ends of the earth may approach God and be saved. How lamentable that any should spurn the infinite blessing and lie down in everlasting sorrows. How can any think it a privilege to be *excused* from using this medium in their approach to God? Do they not know that God without Christ is a consuming fire? What a heaven of delight would break upon the soul that should open its eyes upon this glorious Saviour! They who refuse, lose more in the present life than all creation can bestow. I would rather sit at his feet and see his glory, than to reign eternal emperor of this lower world.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession." Firmly believe the testimony of God concerning him. Place unwavering

confidence in him; "looking to" him as "the author and finisher of" your "faith." Let his love fill your hearts. "Let" your "mouth be filled with" his "praise and with" his "honor all the day." Devote to him your ransomed lives. "Ye are not your own,—ye are bought with a price." Shrink not from "the reproach of Christ." "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." "For the joy that was set before him, [he] endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And it will be no grief of heart to us, when we shall sit down with him on his throne, that we took up the cross and followed him, and became followers of others who through faith and patience inherited the promises. Amen.

SERMON VII.

CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND LIFE.

JOHN, XI. 25.

Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live.

There are certain expressions in the Scriptures which seem to contain a sermon in themselves, and cannot be dilated or put into different words without losing much of their fullness and force. Like the bow in the clouds, they display a beauty formed of different shades, which charm the eye more than the shades separately viewed. Hence when we analyze the compound thought, and in a sermon give you the ideas one by one, we do not increase the pleasure of the first impression. The mind turns from the exposition and delights to dwell on the text itself.

Such, I apprehend, is the character of the text which I have just read in your ears. I know not in what manner I can expand it without weakening

its force. And I expect that after I have done, my spiritual hearers, forgetful of the sermon, will still be dwelling on the text, and repeating over and over again, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

The occasion on which these words were spoken was as follows. There was in Bethany, about two miles east of Jerusalem, an interesting family who received Christ as the Messiah, and whom he and his disciples very tenderly loved. This family consisted of Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. This was that Mary who at a former time, when her sister had received Jesus into her house and was providing him a supper, sat at his feet and heard his words; and who afterwards, a few days before his death, anointed his feet with ointment and wiped them with the hair of her head. And this was that Martha who, after she had hospitably invited Jesus to her house, complained to him that her sister had left her to serve alone. Martha, while she was truly pious, appears to have been ardent, resolute, active in domestic business, and full of words. Mary was still, humble, affectionate, and heavenly minded. She was the more interesting character, and appears to have been more dear to her neighbors and to Jesus. Lazarus was a very worthy, pious man, and tenderly beloved by Christ and his disciples.

It happened at a time when Jesus was in the country on the east of Jordan, that Lazarus fell sick. His sisters, who doted on him, seeing him

at the point of death, despatched a messenger to Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." They had no doubt that their Messiah could save his life. Jesus delayed returning that he might have an opportunity to give a striking proof that he was "the Resurrection and the Life." He stayed two days in the place where he was, and then told his disciples that Lazarus was dead. They were so affected that they said one to another, "Let us go that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he found that Lazarus had lain in the grave four days. The two afflicted sisters were at that time in the house, with numerous friends who had come from Jersualem to comfort them. Martha, having secret information that Jesus was near the town, went out with all her natural eagerness to meet him; but Mary abode still in the house, silently pressed with her grief. "Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God God will give it thee;" intimating perhaps some half formed hope that her brother might yet be raised. "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life. [I carry with me power to raise the dead.] He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the

Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. And when she had so said she went her way, [leaving Jesus still without the town,] and called Mary, her sister, secretely; saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee." As soon as Mary heard that, she arose quickly and came to Jesus. The friends who had come to console her, "when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, [observe the sweet and lovely saint,] saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Her heart was more tender and her grief more silent and deep than that of her sister. "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept." How tender was the heart of that blessed man. "Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him.—Jesus therefore again groaning in himself, cometh to the grave. It was a cave and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone." Martha, who was always full of words, objected that the body was putrefied. "Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid." And Jesus lifted up his eyes and addressed his heavenly Father. O what a countenance was there! Could a painter draw it to the

life, would it not be what one never saw before? What a trembling, awful moment was that to the sisters' hearts. Look to that spot, ye ends of the earth. Ye who wish to learn the power of our Jesus to pluck the prey from the very jaws of death; —who wish to see him attack death in his strong hold, in the sepulchre itself;—ye who would learn whether he can rescue the prey shut up four days in the grave; turn your eyes hither. And Jesus "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth! And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him and let him go." Methinks I see him fall into his sisters' arms. I see their arms strained fast around their brother's neck, and their tears of transport streaming upon his cheek. I see a sister on either side leading a brother home, triumphantly repeating, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

What blessed words are these! One could dwell upon them forever. What a glorious hope has Jesus brought to our world by coming among the dead to be "the Resurrection and the Life!" After this specimen of his power to raise the dead, who will ever despair? *They* have no cause to despair who have long been spiritually dead, shut up in the darkness of the sepulchre, with a great stone upon it,—bound with grave clothes and covered with putrefaction. Where can you find a wretched sinner that is conscious of worse than this? Yet with all

this he need not be discouraged. All this, and less than this, may well drive him to despair of help from himself; but all this, and more than this, (if more could be,) should not dishearten him from looking with confidence to the Saviour of the world. In Christ, (let it be distinctly realized,) there is an overflowing supply for all our wants. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

The work which Christ came to accomplish was a most difficult, and to the eye of sense an impossible task. It was nothing less than to raise the dead. He saw a world completely sunk under the dominion of a three-fold death, and utterly and forever lost. First, he saw them, by the apostacy of their first father, plunged into spiritual death,—"dead in trespasses and sins." Dreadful state! more loathsome than the grave of Lazarus. Every holy principle extinct,—their souls dead to every emotion of love to God,—to every impulse of gratitude; as insensible to mercies, to divine love and beauty, as the bones that are mouldering under the clods of the valley,—and doomed by the law of God to an eternal abandonment to such a state. Secondly, he saw them condemned to temporal death;—their bodies filled with disease and pain, gradually wasting into food for worms, preparing to expire in agonies and to rot in the grave. He saw decay and death wither on all the enjoyments of man,—on his father and mother, on his wife and children, on his houses and lands, on the very fabric of nature, which for the sin of man was doomed

to dissolution. Thirdly, he saw them actually consigned by the sentence of the law to eternal death. O the insupportable ignominy! to be judged unworthy to live in the light of heaven,—unworthy to share in the love of infinite Love itself,—unfit for the society of holy beings, and fit only to be company for devils and fuel for the flames. He saw them condemned to welter under the wrath of the Almighty to all eternity.

Thus he saw the world sunk under the dominion of a three-fold death. And from this state no finite power could redeem them. Nor had they ability to redeem themselves, any more than Lazarus had to tear off his grave clothes and come forth.

In that hour Jesus saw and pitied us and hastened to our relief. He came to destroy the works of the devil,—to break this triple chain which bound the world to death,—and in a three-fold sense to be "the Resurrection and the Life." As these three kinds of death were entailed by the first Adam, and as the redemption by the second Adam was a redemption from the three; all these deaths, as well as the corresponding resurrections, are often thrown together in a sort of mystical confusion, and a transition is made from one to another in the same discourse, not easily understood by one unapprized of all this. An instance of such a transition appears in our context. "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day;" referring to the resurrection of the body. "Jesus said unto her, I am the

Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live; [referring to a resurrection from a three-fold death:] and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die," spiritually and eternally.

The second Person in the Trinity, having undertaken this great work, was, in the subordinate character of Mediator, qualified to be "the Resurrection and the Life" by receiving power and authority to distribute life as he pleases. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" and "as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."

Thus qualified, the Mediator proceeded in his work; the sum of which was to be "the Resurrection and the Life" in a three-fold sense.

1. He becomes "the Resurrection and the Life" by raising his people from the death of sin to the life of holiness. This he does in a double sense. First, by his death he rendered it consistent with the honor of the law to repeal the curse of abandonment pronounced on the race, and by his obedience he obtained the gift of the Spirit to our world. Secondly, having received the administration of the Spirit, he sends out that divine Agent to quicken his people according to his own will: a strong proof, by the by, of his proper divinity, whether the Holy Ghost be a divine Person or only the power of God; for it would be preposterous to suppose that a mere creature should direct God. He promised to send the Comforter to his disciples

to testify of him. And when he got home, he did send out the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, by whose power three thousand were raised from death at once.

This great work of raising a world from the death of sin, he is accomplishing every day. It is the Spirit of Jesus that awakens every careless sinner, that convinces every awakened sinner, that converts every convinced sinner, or in the language of Ezekiel, which breathes life into the dead body in which bone has come to its bone and the flesh and sinews have been gathered thereupon. It is to the power of Jesus alone that parents can look for the resurrection of their dead children,—that ministers can look for the resurrection of their dead hearers,—that sinners can look for the resurrection of their own souls.

He is not only "the Resurrection," but "the Life" also; and when he has raised his people from the death of sin, he continues to support their spiritual existence. This is not only directly asserted, but set forth by various figures. He is the Head to the members, and the Vine which constantly gives life to the branches. The same truth is most delightfully illustrated by the vision of Zachariah. He saw a golden candlestick, with a bowl on the top for the oil. From the bowl seven golden pipes led to seven lamps. On each side of the candlestick was an olive tree, whose principal branch, through a golden pipe, constantly discharged oil into the bowl and fed the lamps, which of course never went out. Thus there is, as it were, a golden

pipe laid from Christ to the believer's heart, through which flow constant supplies of life, light, and comfort. Hence it is that the life and light of Christians continue to shine, notwithstanding all the damps and floods of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and continue, in the language of another, as great a miracle as a candle kept lighted from age to age in the bowels of the ocean. By this unceasing operation countless multitudes will be recovered from the death of sin to the perfection of holiness. And when the blessed assembly shall be displayed together, it will be such a multitude as no man can number, shouting and pointing to Jesus, and rapturously repeating his delightful words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

2. Christ is "the Resurrection and the Life" by raising his people from eternal death to everlasting life. The flames of their hell were extinguished by his blood, which procured and sealed their pardon; and his meritorious obedience purchased for them the inheritance of glory. In him and in him only poor sinners are complete. "There is—now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Because he lives they shall live also. Jesus is the life of the world,—the living bread which came down from heaven, which if a man eat he shall never hunger. He came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. The most abandoned sinner, who is condemned by the law to the lowest hell, by faith in him may be acquitted of all his guilt. *There* is the last hope of

an expiring race. *There* is the only hope which anxious parents can have for their perishing offspring, and dying sinners for their own souls. *There* is the only hope for saints on earth, and the only security for saints in heaven. And *there* is hope *enough*. How many times every day do christians lift their eyes to Jesus, and with every hope centering in him, call him their Resurrection and their Life. And how eminently will he thus appear when he shall display before his throne, in one vast assembly, the immense columns of human beings who were once the heirs of hell, but were raised to life eternal by his mediation and power. Will not heaven forever ring with the music of these delightful words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

3. Jesus is, "the Resurrection and the Life" by eventually raising the bodies of his people from the grave. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The apostle, in proof of the resurrection, quotes a verse from the 110th Psalm, purporting that Christ must hold the mediatorial government until all his enemies are put under his feet; and then alleging death to be an enemy, he brings his argument for the resurrection to a point by saying, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

How precious is our Redeemer, viewed, in this sense, as "the Resurrection and the Life." What a joyous hope is this when we stand around the dying beds of our friends,—when we commit them

to the grave,—when we contemplate those whom we tenderly loved, as masses of putrefaction or entirely dissolved. Jesus is "the Resurrection and the Life," and we shall see our friends again. And what a hope is this when we ourselves are entering the region of the shadow of death. We are not to be lost in eternal oblivion, but may look through the dark region to the light of a glorious resurrection. Jesus has shed a cheerful ray on the precincts of the tomb and diffused a light through the womb of the grave. He will recover all his sleeping saints from the dust. In that glorious morning when the trump shall sound, they shall spring to light from every grave yard, and find death, their last enemy, destroyed. And when they shall awake and find this last foe dead at their feet, and themselves recovered to immortal life; when they shall look up and see the glorious retinue of their descending Saviour and mark the strange commotions in heaven and earth; then, as they are caught up to meet their Lord in the air, with what raptures will they sing as they ascend, "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live."

In that day the whole fabric of the universe,—the earth and the visible heavens,—will be dissolved, and fall into that utter ruin to which they were consigned for the sin of man. There, then, will be the last opportunity for Christ to appear "the Resurrection," though he will always be "the Life." Out of the ashes of the old, his power will raise new heavens and a new earth, while he pronounces,

"Behold I make all things new." And while the saints and angels come out to view the new worlds which the great Restorer has reared, every harp in heaven will sound, and angels and men will fill the new heavens and earth with the hallowed song, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

And shall those lips which will then be vocal, now be sealed in silence? No, let us now begin the praise. Saviour of men, let us delight to triumph in thee, who art to us "the Resurrection and the Life." O let his name and his love be forever on our lips. Let our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth ere we forget him who restores our souls,—who renovates a world. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

THE ASCENSION AND DOMINION OF CHRIST.*

LUKE, XXIV. 50, 51.

And he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.

We have often, when assembled round the sacramental table, remembered him who *died;* let us now remember him who rose again, who "ascended on high" leading "captivity captive," who sat down on the right hand of God, who lives and reigns in heaven. This sacred institution was intended to make us more intimately acquainted with our blessed Saviour in his whole character; to awaken a stronger faith in him, not only as a Priest, but as a Prophet and King. No time is more proper than the present to enter deeply into the glorious plan of salvation, and to search the wonders which fill it in all its infinite length and breadth.

When one has labored long to obtain a clear conception of the priesthood of Christ, and is filled

* Preached at the administration of the Lord's Supper.

with the subject, it is sometimes difficult to apprehend the propriety of his kingly office; that one whose business it is to stand as an intercessor between God and sinners, should hold the reigns of government; that one whom the mind has delighted to contemplate as a high priest, standing on earth to make atonement, standing in heaven to introduce our persons and prayers to God, should also be the king of heaven and earth. Viewed solely as a high priest, the mind may easily apprehend him and his work; but when that atoning interceding priest is stated to be the sovereign of the universe, some confusion is apt to arise. What connexion between the sacerdotal office and regal government? What necessity that the work of governing or of instructing should be committed to the high priest? No such absolute necessity as there was for the atonement. *Justice* would not have complained if the Father had acted as prophet and king; but *wisdom* saw fit to invest the same person with the three offices, and to commit the whole redemption and management of a ruined world to the hands of the Mediator. The world had lost the knowledge of God and sunk into ignorance gross enough to worship stocks and stones: one thing to be done was to teach them the knowledge of God. This was the business of a prophet. They had fallen under the curse of the law: another part of the work of their redemption consisted in atonement and intercession. This was the business of a priest. Still their redemption was not complete. Instruction might have been given and atonement

made; but if nothing more was done, not a human soul would have been saved. The hearts of sinners must be subdued by the power of a king. And even then, no less than a divine king must continue to defend them from the world, the flesh, and the devil. As Christ undertook to rescue a world from the tyranny of Satan, it was proper that he should be invested with the authority of a king, that he might subdue and bind his enemy and have the glory of an illustrious triumph.

Immediately after the fall he entered upon these three offices. As a prophet he instructed the world by his revelations, his ordinances, his servants, his providence, and his Spirit. By anticipating the results of his obedience and death, he procured the salvation of the saints under the Old Testament; presenting to the eye of their faith his priestly office under the shadow of a typical priesthood and typical sacrifices. By anticipating the *reward* of his obedience, he entered upon his kingly government, and exercised dominion over the Church and the world from the beginning. But now the time had come when he was to be a prophet, priest, and king in his own proper person and in a more visible manner. He appeared on earth to instruct the world by his own lips, by apostles and ministers holding commissions stamped with his hand and seal, and by the Spirit which he avowedly sent forth. He came to offer, in his own person and in open view of heaven and earth, a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world, and then to enter into heaven, "to appear in the presence of God for us." He

came to earn and more manifestly to receive the kingdom and the inheritance. His three offices had never before been understood by men or angels. Not a person on earth, not even the eleven disciples, had any proper idea of these things before the day of Pentecost. And long after that day the angels were bending to look into this newly discovered method of grace. The apostle speaks of "the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets—made known to all nations;" "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that *now* unto the *principalities and powers in heavenly places* might be known *by the church* the manifold wisdom of God;" even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints;" "of which salvation," says another apostle, "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching *what* or what manner of *time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed that, not unto themselves but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

To make this new and great display, the second person in the Trinity united himself with the infant of Bethlehem. Angels announced his birth, and a new star guided the wise men from the east to lay their homage at his feet. For thirty years he lived in obscurity, the hope of his parents, increasing "in wisdom and in favor with God and man," laboring in an humble trade; his divine dignity concealed, or shining only in the spotless purity of his life. At the age of thirty he was inducted into his public ministry, perhaps I may say, into his visible priesthood, by the baptism of John; in imitation of the Jewish custom of inducting their priests to office at the age of thirty by washing them with water. At the same time he was anointed with the Holy Ghost, as the Jewish priests were with oil. The Holy Ghost descended upon him "in a bodily shape like a dove," conveying, no doubt, a vast increase of light and wisdom to his human soul. From that time he began to speak as "never man spoke," and to display supernatural wisdom and power. For about three years and a half he executed this public office, proclaiming himself the long-expected Messiah, reproving the corruptions of the church, "preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God," healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out devils. At length the time approached for which all time was made. On the evening of Thursday, the fourteenth day of the first month, answering to our March, he eat the passover with his disciples, and at the close instituted the supper which we are about to celebrate.

The same evening he retired to the garden of Gethsemane, at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where he endured his agony and bloody sweat. On Friday he expired upon the cross. On Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath, the first sheaf of the barley harvest was waved. After this, seven weeks were allowed to reap their barley and wheat harvest, and to return to Jerusalem to hold a thanksgiving for the fruits of the earth. This thanksgiving was called Pentecost, because it was held on the fiftieth day after the first sheaf was waved. This, therefore, must have fallen on the first day of the week. Meantime the Lord of life and glory lay in the sepulchre from Friday evening till the morning of the christian sabbath. All this time the disciples were confounded and knew not what to think; for they had never dreamed that he was to die. Early on the first day of the week he burst the bands of death and appeared to some of his disciples. They were filled with amazement and joy; for when they saw him die they had no idea that he would rise again. As they were Galileans, and lived towards a hundred miles from Jerusalem, he directed them to return home, and appointed a certain mountain in Galilee where he would meet them. As they were about to leave their families to carry the gospel through the world, he graciously suffered them to be at home, gathering their harvest, and setting their affairs in order, while he was giving them the necessary instructions respecting the religion they were to teach and the churches they were to establish. They were very ignorant;

and during the four or five weeks that they spent in Galilee, he repeatedly conversed with them and unfolded divine truth as they could bear it. Their harvest being ended, they returned to Jerusalem more than a week before Pentecost. There Jesus met them, and "commanded them" not to "depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise" of the Holy Ghost, with which, he assured them, they should soon be baptised. After all the instructions which they had received, they returned to Jerusalem with minds still filled with hopes of an earthly kingdom. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They had no idea that he was to ascend into heaven, but expected him to reign in Jerusalem over all nations. During the forty days he had appeared to them in an immortal body, of the same structure with the bodies of the saints at the resurrection, but with no external lustre; for they could not have borne the dazzling splendor. He appeared to them just as he had done before his death, with the same countenance, with a real body having flesh and bones, yet immortal. At length on Friday, just six weeks after his crucifixion, and nine days before Pentecost, "he led them out as far as to Bethany," (they not suspecting what was about to happen;) "and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven;" and "while they beheld,—a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly to-

ward heaven as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." "And they worshipped him," (now more than ever convinced that he was the Son of God,) "and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room," probably the same that they had eaten the passover and the supper in. Here the eleven abode, and "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." That continued prayer was a prelude to the glorious descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. And they "were continually in the temple," (at the hours of prayer,) "praising and blessing God." As soon as they had leisure for reflection, they proceeded to choose Matthias by lot to fill the place of Judas. This is all that is recorded of their transactions during the nine days which preceded Pentecost.

Let us now return to the ascending Saviour. At the moment that he was parted from his disciples on Mount Olivet, his body was surrounded with no visible lustre. But having completed his work on earth, he was now to enter on his glorified state. Perhaps the cloud which received him out of their sight, contained the habiliments of glory with which he was ever afterwards to be arrayed. There he decked himself in his royal robes and began his tri-

umphant march; returning in state like a glorious conqueror to his royal city. I see him attended with "thousands of angels" and with "twenty thousand chariots of God," leading "captivity captive," with death and hell chained to his chariot wheels. That was the most glorious display that heaven had ever seen. Methinks I hear the voice of myriads of angels shouting his triumph. Methinks I see the saints of the Old Testament, who had been saved by his death, but never before had fully understood the way, coming out to lay their honors at his feet and to welcome the Conqueror home. There is Enoch and Noah and Abraham and David and Isaiah and Daniel pressing forward to hail their Deliverer. Now I hear them sing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." With these shouts they introduce him to the heavenly city and see him seated on the highest visible throne in glory, a throne surrounded with indescribable splendor. There for the first time the inhabitants of heaven beheld a created nature on the throne of the universe. There for the first time did the God-man-Mediator appear visibly as King of Zion and King of the whole creation. The glory to which his human nature was now advanced, consisted, not only

in the dignity of being united with his divinity in the government of the universe, but in the outward splendor with which it was arrayed. The best idea that we can form of this splendor is drawn from his transfiguration on Mount Tabor and his appearance in Patmos. In the former case "the fashion of his countenance was altered," "and his face did shine as the sun," "and his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth" could "white them." In the latter instance he was not so changed but that John knew him; nevertheless "his head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters,—and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength." Similar will be the glorified bodies of the saints in the resurrection, when they shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;" for they shall "be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Such bodies did Moses and Elias probably exhibit on the mount of transfiguration; for it is said, they "appeared in glory."

The exalted Saviour now openly took upon himself the government of the Church, with power to quicken whom he would. He was "exalted—to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." He was openly declared "Heir of all things," and received the inheritance as "the First-born among many brethren," who are constituted "joint heirs" with him. In the most public manner he received the govern-

ment of the whole universe, that he might manage all things in heaven, earth, and hell for the good of his people. Thus God "put all things under his feet and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church." He received the empire over devils, that he might bind them continually and finally subdue and judge and punish them. He received the empire over angels, that he might employ them as "ministering spirits" to those who should "be heirs of salvation;" and he sends them forth to watch and defend his people by night and by day. He received the empire over wicked men, that he might subdue his elect by sanctifying grace and break the rest in pieces like a potter's vessel. He was appointed to reign until he should make all his enemies his footstool. He received the empire over winds and waves, over seed time and harvest, over storms and tempests, pestilence and famine, that he might manage all things in the natural world for the good of his people, and that they might have nothing to hope or to fear but from Jesus their Saviour. He received the empire over his elect, that he might sanctify, comfort, and defend them, and complete their salvation. His people are wholly in his hands, with all their interests and trials. Every thing in the government of the world goes through the head and heart of the Mediator, from the falling of a sparrow to the revolutions of empire. This is a new proof of his proper divinity: for the head which contrives and the heart which decrees everything in the universe, must be divine.

Let us turn again to his disciples from whom he

had parted on Mount Olivet. Not all the glories of heaven could divert his thoughts from the beloved family which he had left on earth. He had promised to send them the Holy Spirit. This was the great instrument of instruction which he as a prophet was to employ, the great blessing which by his obedient offering as a priest he had procured, and the great treasure which as a king he was to bestow. Nine days were sufficient for his journey from Mount Olivet to the third heaven and for all the subsequent preparations on earth; and nine days elapsed between the time of his leaving the earth and the arrival of the Comforter. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come," the disciples "were all with one accord in one place;" probably in the same "upper room" into which they had entered on their return from Bethany, and where they had probably before eaten the passover and the supper. This remarkable day was the first day of the week, which, being distinguished both by the resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Ghost, obtained the appellation of the Lord's day, and has ever since been observed as the Christian sabbath. While they were all assembled "with one accord in one place," suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, [an emblem of the gift of tongues which they then received,] and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit

gave them utterance." Instantly their understandings were enlightened; the whole plan of the Gospel opened to their view; the prophecies of the Old Testament were brought to their remembrance and explained; and Peter, standing up, was able for the first time to unfold to the astonished thousands the Gospel and kingdom of God. This was the first day that the plan of salvation was ever understood on earth. Though prophets had sung of Messiah's reign, and the saints of the Old Testament had died in the faith of a Saviour to come; though Christ had taught his disciples during his public ministry and for forty days after his resurrection; and though they had seen him ascend from Olivet; yet till that day the plan of salvation and the nature of the kingdom of Christ had never been understood on earth. On that day too commenced the glorious triumphs of the cross; for the Holy Ghost had come. Three thousand were converted to the Christian faith at once and added to the Church. From that day a great revival of religion commenced, which spread into all parts of the known world, and suddenly gave to the king of Zion, who had obtained a throne in heaven, an extended kingdom on earth. Once more he triumphed over principalities and powers. Satan was driven from vast regions of the heathen world; his throne and temples were overturned; and the Conqueror received, as the reward of his obedience "unto death," a glorious kingdom upon earth, such as he never had enjoyed before.

This dominion at present is the dominion, not of God, but of the Mediator. In this subordinate of-

fice the second Person acknowledges the first as his superior, and administers the government, not by original right, but as his reward. But while the supreme right of the Father is acknowledged, no agency but that of the Son, the Mediator, is known to the inhabitants of heaven or to the Church on earth. Thus will Christ continue to administer the government till he has gathered in all the elect and brought the great plan of redemption to a glorious issue. The last act of his universal mediatorial government will be to judge the world. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father.—Then shall the Son—himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." From that time to eternity the general government will be administered by God in his own proper character. But the Saviour will still sit on the throne of Zion, and continue to be the medium of all communications to the redeemed Church, and of all the praises which will ascend from them. It will be Jesus of Nazareth still,—the same countenance, the same compassionate eyes, the same hands and feet, bearing still the prints of the nails. O how will they surround his throne and gaze upon him, and look down to hell and see from what he delivered them, and look up to his scars, and then cast their crowns at his feet and shout and sing, "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.—Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and

glory and blessing.—Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever." His name will be the sweetest music to their ears. They will hang upon his lips, and gaze upon his eyes, and dwell upon his lovely name, and adore and praise and love as the ages of eternity go round.

This is the dear and blessed name which we are to commemorate in the sacrament to day. When we shall stand around his throne we shall not need such a remembrancer; we shall have him always present to our view. Then we shall see him face to face, but now we must view him through the glass of ordinances. Come, gather around his board, and remember him who was born in Bethlehem, who died on Calvary, who ascended from Olivet, and now lives and reigns in glory. Come and remember him who is made king of angels, and sends them forth daily to minister to you, to preserve your dwellings from fire, to fan the pestilence from your door, to drive away the evil spirits, and to preserve your persons and possessions from every evil. What has not Jesus done for you? He not only died for you, but has sent his holy angels to attend you. Have you considered, when engaged in your daily occupations, how honorably you are attended? When kings go forth they are accompanied by a band of soldiers, but you by a band of angels. And it is because Jesus loveth you. Come and remember him who has spread all the beautiful scenery around you, who gives you food and raiment, and under whose mediatorial government you hourly repose. O did you

know, when you murmured against providence, that it was the providence of Jesus? Come to his board and rejoice that the world is under the government of your Saviour, that all your friends and interests are in his hands, that it is his province to manage all your spiritual concerns,—to carry on and complete your salvation. Every thing is fixed precisely as infinite wisdom and love would have it, for all things are under the management of Jesus. What could you wish for more? What change can you desire? In what single circumstance would you move for an alteration? Our blessed Jesus governs all. Would you take the government of a single event out of his hands? To whom then would you commit it? To angels? They never loved like Jesus. To chance? There is no such love in chance. To men? Men never died to save your lives. To yourselves? Jesus loves you better than you love yourselves, and knows infinitely better what is for your good. Come then to his board and rejoice that this redeemed world is governed by the matchless love of him who died to deliver it from Satan's oppression. Come and give up your souls to this dear exalted Saviour. And O may that Spirit which on Pentecost descended, like "a rushing mighty wind," into the room where this feast of love was first ordained, descend where it is kept to day. Make this a little Pentecost to us, O thou risen Saviour, and breathe upon us as thou didst upon the disciples in the upper chamber, for thy name's sake. Amen.

SERMON IX.

THE PATIENCE OF CHRIST.

I. Tim. i. 16.

Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

Unbelief represents God as acting from mere calculation, without any of that direct love which exists among creatures. The principal end of Christ's mediatorial work was to dispel this delusion with every other, and to bring forth the real character of God to view. He "is the image of God," held out to show creatures what God is. The better to do this he appeared in a nature capable of feeling all the passions of men, and in that nature felt, in every moral respect, precisely like God. It was a man taken into personal union with the Deity, that so his feelings might be a public and full exposition of the heart of God. It was God acting with human sensibilities, to show more familiarly how the eternal Father feels,—how men, with their tastes

and passions, ought to feel,—and to reveal the moral contrast between men and God. It was God set forth to view in a visible and tangible form, with all the wants, sensibilities, and temptations of men. It was eternal purity and love laid out upon a human scale.

Amidst the divine glories which shine in the person and work of Christ, my attention now fixes on his patience. To this I am led by the grateful acknowledgment of that wondrous man who, converted from a bloody persecutor to an apostle, had been pardoned at the foot of the cross. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Passing by other views, I am disposed to contemplate the patience of Christ,

I. As it appeared before Pilate and the Jews.

II. As it appears in his long suffering towards his people, both before and after their conversion.

III. As it appears in his consent to atone, and in a sense to answer, for all their sins against himself.

I. I am to consider his patience as it appeared before Pilate and the Jews.

Bishop Horsely remarks, that properly to consider the example of Christ, is one of the last things which a mature faith achieves. I will add, that no man is fully prepared to admire the patience of Christ till he has had an opportunity to feel how hard it is to bear malignity and scorn. How does the great apostle of the Gentiles, (probably the ho-

liest mere man that ever lived,) fade in comparison with him who stood before Pilate and the Jews. When the high priests, at the head of the Sanhedrim, commanded one to smite him on the mouth, Paul answered with spirit, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" But when, in a similar condition, one actually smote Christ, as he would a slave, with the palm of his hand, you hear only this meek reply: "If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" He was arrested, arraigned, and interrogated as a criminal; but nothing could irritate or discompose him.—They brought false witnesses against him; they accused him of blasphemy, and pronounced him worthy of death. They spit in his face; they mocked and buffeted him; they blindfolded him and smote him on the face with "the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" The very servants treated him in this insulting manner. His "disciples forsook him and fled." The chief one of them, overcame by the dreadful scene, denied him in his very presence with oaths and curses. Still he remained unruffled. He was sent bound to Pilate, and thence to Herod. Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and insultingly arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him back to Pilate. In the presence of Pilate a robber was preferred before him. "They cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Pilate then having scourged him, (an ope-

ration to the last degree torturing and cruel,) delivered him up to be crucified. The whole band of soldiers then gathered around him, and stripped his mangled body, and put on him a robe of mock royalty and a crown of thorns, and placed a reed in his right hand for a sceptre, and spit in his face, and smote him with their hands, and with the reed drove the thorns into his temples, and contemptuously bowed the knee before him and hailed him king of the Jews. Still he was calm. He talked composedly at different times during the whole scene. Nothing could exasperate him; nothing could hurry his spirits; nothing could flush his cheek or fire his eye; nothing could discompose a feature. His temper, like omnipotence itself, was proof against everything that an enemy could do. The fortitude of an Alexander vanishes here. It was unspeakably harder to bear these insults than to break through embattled legions. And to bear them with such a temper, was more difficult still. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." Well might the apostle beseech men "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." When they had dragged him to Calvary, they suspended him on the torturing spikes between two thieves; they mocked him with vinegar and gall; they insulted his agony with the most cruel sarcasms and the most provoking triumphs. "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads." Still not a threat nor a reproach could they extort from him. The very thieves who were dying with him, insulted

and blasphemed him. One of them he converted and pardoned almost before the blasphemies were silent on his tongue. At last, lifting his languishing eye to heaven, he poured out his expiring breath in prayer for his murderers: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If his former patience outdid that of a man, this was indeed the patience of a God. Here was displayed before a wondering universe the perfect spirit of the divine law,—the real temper of the eternal God,—and precisely what men ought to be.

But there is another view of his patience which must by no means be omitted. All these trials dwindle into nothing compared with that which is yet to be mentioned. In that fearful hour, not only were the powers of earth and hell let loose upon him, but his Father withdrew from him the light of his countenance. That paternal countenance which had been wont to beam upon him with ineffable tenderness, was now darkened with an awful frown. When the wondrous phenomenon occured that God the Father frowned on God the Son, no wonder that the sun of our system veiled itself in darkness, —that the earth trembled and quaked. The repose of the sleeping dead was disturbed; all nature was convulsed, and the heaven of heavens was wrapt in amazement and concern. But amidst this strange commotion of the universe, the meek-eyed Jesus was composed and calm. The Lamb of God submitted without a murmur, and with but one exclamation of distress, to the stroke of almighty vengeance. For six long hours he hung on the ragged

irons without an impatient feeling. He meekly bore the sin of man and the tokens of his Father's wrath. He bore it, penitent sinner, he bore it all for you.

II. Let us contemplate his patience as it appears in his long suffering towards his people, both before and after their conversion.

Many of his elect were engaged in that horrid scene,—many whom he had loved with an everlasting love. Did he strike them dead? Did he change his electing decree? No, he loved them still, and notwithstanding this infernal malice, was willing to die for their redemption. Before his body was removed from the cross, he sent his Spirit to bring some of those murderers to repentance, and following it up with his pardoning love, washed them white in the blood they had shed. The centurion who had commanded that brutal band,—who had presided over that whole scene of horrid mockery, and ordered every nail to be driven; he, and some of his blood stained crew, were convinced by the darkness and the earthquake, were transfixed by fear and remorse, and before they left the spot were brought to repentance, and glorified God, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God." "And *all* the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned." Forty-nine days after this, when an immense concourse of these murderers were assembled on the day of Pentecost, Peter charged home upon them the atrocious deed: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknow-

ledge of God, *ye* have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." While he spoke, the Holy Ghost, sent out by the risen Saviour, fell upon them, and brought to repentance and to mercy three thousand of these murderers at once. A few days after, the same apostle made the same charge against a vast multitude assembled in the temple. And "many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand." And if eight thousand were brought to repentance under the first two sermons, what multitudes received the same grace before that generation passed away. A great many thousands who had consented to the most atrocious deed that was ever perpetrated by men or devils, were admitted to the bosom they had pierced, and received from the face which they had smitten and marred, nothing but smiles and love.

But passing by an innumerable multitude, let us consider the instance alluded to in the text. Saul of Tarsus was the chief of sinners. Deeply read in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, with an intellect powerful and discriminating, he ought to have been among the first to discover the proofs which surrounded the mission of Christ. He had long dwelt in streets which the Son of God had filled with his miracles and illuminated with his doctrines,—which he had consecrated by his prayers and watered with his tears. He could not have been ignorant of the darkness and the earthquake which attended the crucifixion, nor of the wonders wrought on the day

of Pentecost. And yet he resisted all the light, and became an infuriated leader in the unhallowed insurrection against the Messiah. He was among the first and most zealous that raised the torch of persecution. When the beloved Steven was stoned, Saul was "consenting to his death." He "imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed." "Many of the saints" he "shut up in prison,—and when they were put to death" he "gave" his "voice against them. And" he "punished them oft in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them,——persecuted them even unto strange cities." He demanded letters from the chief priests to Damascus, and volunteered in that direction as a missionary of persecution. I see him urging his journey with anxious speed, with his eye fixed on the distant prey, foaming with rage, feasting his heart with anticipations of Christian tears and blood, firmly determined not to rest till he had left to the hated "Nazarine" neither name nor memorial on earth. But behold, "at mid day" he "saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun." It was the Lord Jesus descending in the habiliments of his glory. But why has he descended? Is his patience quite exhausted? Has his right hand taken hold on vengeance? Is he about to smite the rebel trembling at his feet? Will his first words be, Depart thou cursed? Ah, it is the patient Jesus still. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" The trembling rebel cries, "Who art thou, Lord?" The Lord does not strike him dead

by uncovering the awful glories of the Godhead He tenderly replies, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose,"—what purpose? "to make" him "a minister" of the Gospel of peace, a chosen vessel to bear his name among the Gentiles, a distinguished champion of the cross; to labor and suffer and die for his name's sake. This was an instance purposely set up to convince the Church in all ages of the amazing patience of Christ. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."

Was this the character of Christ eighteen hundred years ago? He is still the same. For though he does not now by miraculous interpositions hang around him the outward marks of his character, to strike the senses, but has retired from our view, he has retired for this purpose, that being no longer an object of sight, he might give stronger action to faith. But he is still the same, and leaves not himself without a daily witness. With the same unconquerable love and patience he bears with all the sins of his elect through the periods of their childhood, youth, and riper years, while yet they are his enemies and hold him bound by no covenant obligations. While yet they are united with the wicked in reviling his religion and blaspheming his name, his love is still fixed upon them. He watches over them day and night to protect them from ten thousand dangers. "A thousand" may "fall at

their side, and ten thousand at" their "right hand," but they are still preserved. He follows them with the checks and whispers of his Spirit. He frequently forces them into the secret corner to pray. He calls them when like little Samuel they know not who it is that calls them. At length when the appointed time arrives, he sets home the law upon their hearts. The commandment comes, sin revives, and they die. O then they think they are forever cast out from his presence. But these are only the measures he takes to bring them home. Their hearts resist all these impressions, but his patience never fails. And when the selected moment comes, he changes the heart of stone to flesh and puts a new song in their mouths. From that instant he is bound to them by a covenant which nothing can dissolve, and takes upon himself the finishing of their salvation. From that moment he loves them as himself, and it becomes as fixed as heaven that none of their sins can separate them from him. They may raise temporary walls of partition between him and themselves, but nothing can exhaust his patience. As a mother feels for her sick and froward infant, whose side she never leaves, so he feels for them. And so will he continue to feel until he has brought them home to glory.

III. Let us consider his patience as manifested in his consent to atone, and in a sense to answer, for all the sins of men against himself.

This is a greater wonder still. While believers, (to speak only of them,) are sinning, he patiently consents that all their sins, as they hourly arise,

should be charged against himself, and should be pardoned for the sake of his sufferings. Should a child abuse his parents, and the mother, not content with patiently enduring the injury, should offer her intercession to procure forgiveness from the father, and consent to have the offence charged against herself, this would be but a faint image of the astonishing love of Christ. He freely suffered an equivalent for our punishment, so needful to support the authority of the law. He put himself in the place of his people, and, (so to speak,) assumed and discharged all their debts, wiping off all future scores. This done, he ascended to intercede for them in the presence of God,—to take hourly upon himself, (if I may so say,) all their new debts as they come in, swallowing them all up in the general satisfaction he has made. All our ingratitude against himself he in this manner assumes,—all our forgetfulness of him,—all our cruelty which opens his wounds afresh. Where am I? Am I carried back to the judgment hall and the Pretorium? The patience of Christ is certainly as great now as then.

Such is Christ; and exactly such is God. There is no moral difference between them. In love to a world of sinners God is not second. The whole plan of mercy is spoken of as originating with him. The Father "*sent* his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," and is as willing to accept the satisfaction as Christ was to make it. In consenting that his Son should take upon himself the burden of mediation, his love to the world was as great as that of Christ. He that has seen the moral cha-

racter of the Son, has seen that of the Father. We behold the whole Godhead shining forth "in the face of Jesus Christ." He is "the brightness of" the Father's "glory and the express image of his person;" and "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Here then the character of God is clearly brought out to light. And is this the God whom a wicked world abhor? Is this he whose government they oppose, whose throne they would demolish, whom lust and rancour represent as a tyrant worse than Nero? Where sleep the thunders while such blasphemies are abroad?

Such is God; and such man ought to be,—in love,—in love to enemies,—in love to all. This is holiness. This is what the law of God requires. This is what the government of God was established to promote. Yet against this law and government the whole world are in arms and outrageous in their murmurs. Where is the red right hand of justice? Ah, it is held motionless by the arm of mercy,—by patience which astonishes all heaven.

Such is Christ; and how important a place does he fill in the religion of Christians. From the system of pagan morals he may well be spared; but can real Christians put him out of view, or reduce him to a mere schoolmaster sent out to instruct? If it is the Christian religion which we profess, our devotions, our faith, our hopes should be full of Christ. He is the all in all to Christians. That religion which does not begin and end with him, is not of God.

Such is Christ, and on him ought Christians to

place their unwavering confidence. In point of patience and love, the human nature of Christ is what it was when he stood before Pilate, though probably vastly enlarged; and in point of all moral feelings, his human nature is an exact image of the divine. Why sayest thou then, O Christian, that he has not patience enough to keep covenant with thee? that he has not love enough to save so stupid, neglectful, and vile a sinner?——That he is *not* weary of thee, proves indeed his unparalleled patience. Any mere man would soon grow weary of so perverse a charge. This you know; and entertaining too low ideas of his love, you are tempted to think him altogether such a one as yourself. But would you behold him in the light that Paul now does, you would awake from your gloomy dream and stand astonished at the amazing love and patience of Christ. Could you with enlightened faith behold him patiently enduring all the sins of his *unregenerate* elect in all nations and ages, without any abatement of his love to their persons; could you view him bearing with all the faults of his *regenerate* family, scattered among the nations and drawn into a million different follies by the temptations of the world; could you see all this, and understand that in no instance since the conversion of Adam has his patience towards his people ever failed; you would gather courage to commit your all into his hands, and among the rest, a poor, imperfect soul, to be purified by his blood and Spirit and presented to the Father by his intercession. And why can you not see all this? All this is the truth of

God; why can you not believe it? There sits Christ above these visible heavens, with the same love and patience that appeared in the judgment hall. There he sits, and loves his people with infinite tenderness, and patiently pleads for the pardon of all their sins as they arise. All this is as real as though you saw it with your eyes. Could you, like Thomas, see, you would believe. But Christ has retired from sight on purpose to give operation to faith; and now he says, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Go to him with the prayer of the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith?" Plead, with the father of the lunatic, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." You must depend on him and go to him as much for faith as for life. Go and receive more faith, and exercise it in confidently trusting in his love and faithfulness. He has proved himself faithful in all past ages. None ever trusted in him and were desolate. He has "been our dwelling place in all generations." He will never leave nor forsake his people. Commit your all to him without wavering, and he will keep that which you have committed to him till the day of his appearing.

Such is Christ; and if there is any virtue or any gratitude, let us devote our hearts and lives to him. Let us "thus judge,——that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." We "are not" our "own," we "are bought with a price." Let us "therefore glorify God in" our "body and in" our "spirit, which are God's."

Shall this heavenly benefactor continue to be "wounded in the house of" his "friends"? Shall this grace of God be turned into licentiousness? Will any take encouragement to sin from that love which stooped from heaven to redeem them from all pollution? Will they transgress because their sins were ponderous enough to crush their Redeemer from a throne to the manger and the cross? No exhibition ever made in hell pronounces sin to be so dreadful as does the cross of Christ. Dream not that he came to be "the minister of sin." No, he came to "save his people *from* their sins." And it is inscribed on the foundations of his kingdom, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

O sinners, can you reject such a Saviour! Will you plunge into eternal burnings rather than receive him? Will you stand and sport with his agonies? Will you trample his blood under foot? Will you break your way to hell over his mangled body? Stop, stop your mad career. O turn, and let the blood which your sins have shed wash out every stain. Turn before justice allows his patience to work no longer. Turn before the Lamb is changed to a lion; before he rouses his wrath and swears, You shall not see my rest.

SERMON X.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD.

JOHN, XVIII. 36.

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.

The policy of kings and the pride and avarice of priests have sought to raise the Church to civil power and to make it an appendage of the state. Every such attempt has served only to sink the spirit of religion into the spirit of the world. While the altar has been set to prop the throne, it has fumed the nose of majesty, but has ceased to send its incense to heaven. God is a Spirit, and it is the business of his kingdom to govern the spirits of men. That kingdom, though it extends its authority to the courtier as well as the peasant, has nothing to do with the affairs of state. And it asks nothing of the state but protection. It asks no sword to cut the throats of heretics. It seeks no alliance offensive and defensive with the civil arm. It thanks no potentate for his officious interference

to force men to heaven. It is the empire of the Eternal Spirit over the spirits of men, and is founded only in their free consent. Had this principle been well understood, it would have saved all the Christian blood which has stained the sword of guilty persecution; it would have broken up all religious establishments, and swept away a long catalogue of lords spiritual and ghostly magistrates.

The Jews expected that their Messiah would appear in the character of a temporal prince; that he would raise them to the empire of the world, and like another Cesar tread the nations beneath his feet. Hence the jealous attempt of Herod to take off the infant Saviour by a general massacre of the infants of Bethlehem. Accustomed as the nation were to this expectation, they supposed that Jesus of Nazareth intended to set up for an earthly king, and their plan was to accuse him of treason against Cesar. For this purpose they watched his words; they sent forth spies to ensnare him; and when they could gain nothing, they suborned false witnesses to swear, "We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying that he himself is Christ a king." All this time their great objection to his claims was, that he did not appear in the spirit and splendor of a temporal monarch and break their Roman yoke. The very disciples followed him with the same expectations, and were disappointed and chagrined at the long delay. But why, ye followers of the Lamb, does it grieve you that your Master, who is to rule over all worlds, does not come down to an earthly

throne? Why, ye malicious Jews, should it be a matter of complaint that he does not lay aside his universal dominion to manage the affairs of your little state? Is it not a more godlike office to rule the spirits of men, to reduce their raging passions, and to make them good and happy, than to shine in the pageantry of earthly splendor? to overcome the powers of hell, than to destroy the Samaritans? to deliver you from the bondage of sin and Satan, than from the power of the Romans? to raise you to an eternal throne, than to lift you to dominion over the heathen. Has not he who has been taught to govern himself, been served by a better king than he who has been led to victory through the blood of slaughtered armies? Is not the peasant who under this banner has vanquished the world, the flesh, and the devil, a better and happier man than Cesar in all his glory? It became then the benevolence as well as the dignity of Christ to put himself at the head of a kingdom not of this world.

But he had other ends to answer by this arrangement. He wished to draw away the affections of his subjects from creature enjoyments, and he wished to separate them from the principles and manners of worldly men. And it behooves them to demean themselves as the subjects of a kingdom not of this world. Let us attend to these three ideas.

I. He declined an earthly throne and established a kingdom not of this world, in order to draw away the affections of his subjects from creature enjoyments. He saw that the very soul of the apostacy consisted in loving the creature more than the Crea-

tor,—in forsaking the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns,—in removing the heart from God to the gratification of worldly tastes. He saw that mankind had become slaves to the world, and that their selfishness, pride, and idolatry were hourly inflamed by a close connexion with worldly objects. The grand thing therefore to be done was to weaken their attachment to the world and to send them back for happiness to the Source of their being. For this purpose he took measures to convince them that the world was not the good which he came to bestow. That he might fasten a deep and lasting impression of this truth upon their minds, instead of assuming the badges of royalty he appeared in our world in a destitute condition, not having where to lay his head. He was the reputed son of a carpenter and born in a manger. He selected his officers of state from a band of illiterate fishermen, and was crucified between two thieves. He passed by the mighty and noble, and chose for the materials of his Church the base things of the world, and things which were despised, and things that were not, to bring to nought things that were. Had he appeared in royal splendor and selected his ministers and disciples from men of rank and fortune, it would have seemed as though a part of the blessedness of his kingdom consisted in worldly greatness. But now it is manifest that it consists, not in those things which foster pride and carnal desire, but in those which gratify humble benevolence.

II. Another end which he had in view in establishing a kingdom not of this world, was to sepa-

rate his subjects from the principles, maxims, and manners of worldly men. The world had all gone out of the way; there was none that did good, no not one. They were all dead in trespasses and sins. Of course their governing principles and their manners were corrupt. In order therefore to bring them back to God, he came to introduce them to a kingdom whose principles, maxims, and manners were wholly unlike those of the world. The principle which holds the first rank in the world is selfishness; the principle which holds the first rank in the kingdom of Christ is disinterested love. The principle which stands second in the world is pride; the principle which stands second in the kingdom of Christ is humility. The principle which comprehends the entire spirit of the world is lust,—lust of honor, wealth, and pleasure; the principle which comprehends the whole spirit of the kingdom of Christ is self-denial.

The world having thus yielded to principles diametrically opposite to the kingdom of Christ, it was to be expected that the maxims and manners growing out of these principles would be equally different. It is not strange if the *great mass* of the maxims and manners of the two kingdoms are found in direct opposition. These points of difference probably have not all been developed. I doubt not that there are many opinions and customs tolerated even by serious men, which will be exploded when the kingdom of Christ is established in its purity. Some of these may perhaps even now be pointed out.

It is a maxim of the world that they may indulge

in as many amusements, not expressly forbidden as they please, though having no connexion with health or any useful object; it is a maxim of the kingdom of Christ that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do we should do all to the glory of God. It is a maxim of the world that they may spend many of their social hours in conversation which has no useful tendency; it is a maxim of the kingdom of Christ that for every idle word men shall give account in the day of judgment. It is a maxim of the world that they may gratify their pride in as many expenses as their income will allow; the laws of Christ forbid the indulgence of pride in any form or degree, and require every thing to be saved that reasonably can be for the poor and for the extension of his kingdom. It is a maxim of the world that they may make presents to the rich as far as their selfishness desires; one of the statutes of the kingdom of Christ says with a frown, "He that giveth to the rich shall surely come to want." We are not indeed forbidden to exchange hospitalities with our affluent neighbors, much less with our kindred; but the following emphasis laid on charity feasts ill accords with the maxims of the world: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." It is a maxim

of the world that they may lay up treasures on earth, and even hold their gains with the grasp of death; the kingdom of Christ says, "*Sell* that ye have and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." There is no end to the enumeration. One cannot cast a serious eye on the world and then on the Bible, without discovering some strong point of difference.

The *scale of degrees* by which merit is estimated is altogether different in the two kingdoms. In the world the man is commonly esteemed the greatest who is most forward to press himself upon the public view; in the kingdom of Christ he is esteemed the greatest who in honor prefers others and takes for himself the lowest room. The man who is most esteemed in the kingdom of Christ, is the one whom the world are most likely to overlook; on the contrary, "that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination in the sight of God." Here is a Lazarus covered with rags and sores, whom the world, as she sweeps by him, deems unworthy of a look; yet that same poor man holds a higher place in the heart of God than the pampered wretch who is clothed in purple and fine linen and fares sumptuously every day. To advance in the world is to grow in riches, honors, and human science; to make progress in the kingdom of Christ is to grow in humility and brokenness of heart. To advance in the world is generally connected with a high opinion of ourselves; to ascend in the kingdom of Christ is to sink into low and abasing thoughts of

ourselves. To grow in the world is generally to be alive to the world and dead to God; to grow in the kingdom of Christ is to be alive to God and dead to the world. Hence,

III. It behooves Christians to demean themselves as subjects of a kingdom not of this world.

(1.) It behooves them to renounce their idolatrous attachment to the *things* of the world. They are not indeed required to withdraw from business. It is a decree of heaven that if a man will not work neither shall he eat. And he that provides not for his own, hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. But the thing forbidden is to place the *heart* on the things of the world,—to set up wealth as an object of desire for its own sake, and to pursue it with so much interest and hurry as to crowd out the duties of religion. Great wealth is rather to be dreaded than desired. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." The same danger attends a full tide of prosperity in any form. To set the heart on any of these things is altogether incompatible with the Christian character. What saith the Scripture? "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."—You have died to the world and gone into another kingdom. How strange would it seem for a man who had died and gone to heaven, to long to return to the enjoyments of the world.

(2.) It behooves Christians to separate themselves from the principles, maxims, and manners of the world. Could they live under a deep impression that they belong to a kingdom altogether separate from the world, they would feel like pilgrims and strangers on the earth. But you *are* the subjects of another kingdom, citizens of another country, and are bound to act according to the relations you sustain. It would ill become an Englishman to adopt the manners of the Turks. But *in time of war* to join a hostile banner against one's own people, is treason. Let those Christians who would tremble at the thought of turning traitors to their country never desert the standard of their King to act upon the principles of the world.

It is impossible for any man faithfully to serve two contending kingdoms,—to be at once a man of the world and a faithful disciple of Christ. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Be ye not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The taste of the world is opposite to the taste of God. One is founded in selfishness, pride, and lust; the other in the most perfect benevolence. It is therefore impossible that the same line of conduct should please both God and the world. "If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ." "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." On the other hand, "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." It is indeed too late to rekindle the faggots or to apply the

rack or the screw. There are also portions of the world who have their judgment and manners so far refined by Christianity, that they are not offended at the exemplifications of Christian *morality*, provided men will not introduce religion into *conversation;* nor even at a display of the *outlines* of divine *truth* on public occasions; nor at knowing that men *in secret* hold all the distinguishing doctrines and practise all the devotions of revealed religion, if they will but keep their religion to themselves and not bring it into contact with them. They will even tolerate a public exposition of many of the distinguishing *doctrines*, provided they are not brought home to their own conscience, and especially if the preacher will conform to their rules of social intercourse in private. Many real Christians escape their censure by a general conformity in little things, or by living retired from public view, or by exhibiting in their conduct more of the mildness and beneficence of the divine nature than of the holiness and justice, or by failing to express those parts of truth, (in relation to the guilt, dependance, and obligations of man and the sovereignty of God,) which are the most grating to the wicked, or by neglecting to reprove them, either in words or by the distinct expression of their conduct. But let any man continually carry about him, in his conduct and conversation, a *full* and *distinct* image of God, expressing all the truths of his word, all the strictness of his law, all the guilt and danger of sinners,—reproving everything proud, everything vain, everything selfish, everything that does not make God the su-

preme object, everything tinctured with the slightest bitterness towards men, "every idle word," every small neglect, and let his daily conversation be as full of God and of eternal things as it ought; in a word, let him carry, as it were in his hand, wherever he goes, a full, and not a partial, image of God, including whatever is most offensive to the carnal heart, and let him be constituted by his age or office a reprover; and there is not a community of worldly men in Christendom who will not be offended; and if they persecute in no other way, they will at least smite with the tongue,—unless indeed they are silenced by the convicting Spirit, or are restrained by personal attachment or some apparent interest. The carnal heart is as much opposed to God as ever.

Would a man therefore be thoroughly a Christian, he must lay his account to give up many things which the world esteem most valuable, and be marked by distinctions which the world abhor. He must sit down and count the cost, and come to a fixed resolution to part with many things which the strong principle of pride loudly demands. The whole system of undefiled religion is a cross to pride. Self-denial lies at the bottom of all.

It is indeed hard to submit to this; not because the world is so valuable, but because our foolish hearts are so wedded to it. But hard as it is, other saints who have gone before us have made the sacrifice, and proved by the readiness with which they came out from a wicked generation, by their striking contrariety to the world, and the humble firm-

ness with which they bore reproaches, that they viewed themselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and sought a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. How unlike to the history of the world is the history of those ancient worthies. The former is the history of men pursuing, at the hazard of every righteous principle, wealth, honor, and pleasure,—the world's trinity; the latter is the history of men patiently enduring reproaches, regardless what they suffered if they could but glorify and enjoy God. The former is the history of men in splendid circumstances, looking down with contempt on the pious poor; the latter is the history of men walking in the dust, returning entreaties for abuses, pursuing no dominion but a dominion over themselves, consuming their lives in toiling for the interests of truth and religion, and looking for their reward in another world. Noah sacrificed his reputation and the labor of a hundred and twenty years upon an ark, while the world around him were mocking at his credulity. And do you think he has ever repented it? Ask him and he will tell you no. Abraham forsook the pleasant plains of Mesopotamia, the honors of a noble family, and all the endearments of kindred, to consume his days in a foreign wilderness, dwelling in tents and feeding flocks. Moses, though trained in all the luxury of Pharaoh's court, and perhaps the heir apparent to the first throne on earth, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; es-

teeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Paul was willing to leave the highest honors of his nation, to wander an outcast through the world, to endure toils, buffetings, imprisonments, and death; saying as he went, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." In every age this has been the temper of the true Church. And at the present day, many have burst every band which bound them to earth, and gone to spend their days on barbarous shores, among sooty pagans, to promote the cause of benevolence and of Christ.

Surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, shall we sink under the light burdens which we are called to bear, and grieve to find that our kingdom is not of this world?

In the light of our subject we see how different the most moral of worldly men are from real Christians. Of the former the governing principles are selfishness, pride, and idolatry; of the latter, love and humility. We learn also that temporizers, who are afraid to avow their sentiments and to breathe their proper spirit; who put off their religion when they go into company, and submit to unwarrantable compliances to please worldly men; who are determined at all hazards to preserve the friendship of the world; have no part in the kingdom of Christ. They may be Calvinists or Socinians, but they are not Christians. We learn also that if the world frown on our religion, it is only what we had a right to expect. The world has frowned on true

religion in every age. But its frowns have never kept a single Christian out of heaven. Let none be appalled as though some new and strange thing had happened to them. Go fearlessly by their frowns and enter a world where all is peace and love.

By this test let us try the sincerity of our religion. If we cannot relinquish the favor of the world for Christ; if we cannot show that we love him better than all the delights of earth, if in the trying hour we flinch, and are offended as soon as tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word; why did we ever profess his name? The root of the matter is not in us, and we are still in our sins.

Finally, let us be encouraged to proceed with a firm step through all the sufferings and self-denial which this poor world can create. Let us never repine that religion tears us from objects which serve only to nourish pride, and of course stand opposed to our happiness. These husks are not the children's bread. Your heavenly Father would not have lavished them on his enemies and denied them to you had he not provided for you a far better good. What is the world to you? Your estate lies in another country. The world will soon be melted down in the general conflagration; and those worldlings who now frown will then be crying to rocks and mountains to cover them. And when the world is on fire, and every thing but true religion is going to wreck, who then will grudge sinners their portion? Like the complaining Asaph, let us search in

the sanctuary for their end; and having found it, let us join in his holy choir, and prolong his seraphic strain; "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." Amen.

SERMON XI.

CALLING ON THE NAME OF JESUS.

Acts, vii. 59.

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

It is to be numbered among the evidences of our Saviour's divinity, that he is an object of prayer. It may comport with the principles of the Romish church to address their petitions to created spirits; but a protestant who would preserve consistency, must either subscribe to the divinity of Christ or refuse to call upon his name. We have an instance before us of a martyr, who on the verge of immortal light, while his soul was filled with the Holy Ghost, and the heavens were opened to his mortal vision, called on the name of Jesus. There is no term in the original answering to the word *God*. This was supplied by the translators: but the meaning would have been better preserved without it. In the original it is thus: "And they stoned Stephen, calling

upon and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The immediate object of his prayer was the Redeemer, whom he was then beholding at the right hand of God. It was the practice of the primitive Christians to call on the name of Christ. This was the discriminating mark between them and the Jews, who called on the name of the Father but refused divine honors to the Son. When the Lord Jesus appeared in vision to Ananias at Damascus and commanded him to visit the penitent Saul, "Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that *call on thy name*." And when he had come to Saul, he concluded his message in these words: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptised and wash away thy sins, *calling on the name of the Lord*."—the same Lord Jesus. "And straightway" Saul "preached *Christ* in the synagogues:—but all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that destroyed them which *called on this name in Jerusalem?*" The first Epistle to the Corinthians is addressed to "the church of God which is at Corinth,—with all that in every place *call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*." To the Romans Paul writes: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.—For the Scripture saith, Whosoever *believeth on him* shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all,

[meaning Jesus Christ,] is rich unto all that *call upon him.* For whosoever shall *call upon the name of the Lord* shall be saved. How then shall they *call on him in whom they have not believed?* [It was Jesus Christ in whom they were to believe.] And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not *heard?*" "These things," says John, "have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God.—And this is the confidence that we have in *him, that if we ask anything according to his will he heareth us.* And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions that we desired *of him.* If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask and *he,* [the Son of God,] shall give him life for them that sin not unto death."

Persons acquainted only with our English translation, may imagine that they discover in another passage a prohibition against praying to Christ. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." The darkness of this passage is wholly in our translation; in the original the sense is plain. The confusion in our version is produced by translating two words of quite different significations by one and the same English term. I mean the word *ask.* One of the Greek words thus translated signifies to ask questions; the other, to ask in a way of petition. In the preceding conversation Jesus had foretold his death in a manner which the disciples did not understand, and they were anxious to comprehend his meaning.

"Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me?" Then having expressed himself somewhat more intelligibly concerning his death and resurrection, and their subsequent joy on earth, (referring to Pentecost,) he adds, "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing." Ye shall have no occasion to interrogate me, or that I should be present to solve your doubts. When you shall be anointed with the Holy Ghost, you will not need "that any man teach you, but—the same anointing" shall teach you "all things." "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." And furthermore, to supply the want of my personal presence and instruction, "Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name,"—whatsoever wisdom or knowledge ye shall request,—"he will give it you."

Thus the primitive Church did not confine their petitions to the Redeemer; they prayed also to the Father. Sometimes we are taught to supplicate the Father in the name of Christ, and are told that the Father will answer; because all the blessings originally come from him. Sometimes we are taught to ask the Father in the name of Christ, and are told that *Christ* will answer; because to him as King of Zion is committed the distribution of all good. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will *I* do.—If ye shall ask any thing in my name, *I* will do it." And sometimes, as we have seen, we are

taught to pray immediately to Christ, with assurances that *he* will bestow. I will,

I. Inquire how Christ and the Father can both bestow, and are both the proper objects of prayer.

II. Consider some of the peculiar advantages of praying to Christ.

I. How is it that Christ and the Father can both bestow, and are both the proper objects of prayer? We cannot indeed comprehend the mode of union between the Persons of the Trinity, or between the divine and human nature of Christ; and it may be doubtful whether we fully comprehend the *Mediator's* connexion with the Father and dependance on him. As it is a connexion and dependance of *office*, I am not sure that any part of it is incomprehensible. The following things the Scriptures enable us at least to *assert*.

1. When Christ is spoken of as the object of prayer, and as the agent that bestows, it is not to be understood of him as pure God or as mere man, but as Mediator,—as one holding an office under God, but himself consisting of two natures;—as the Agent delegated by the Father to redeem the Church, to govern the universe, to receive prayers, and to bestow blessings.

2. The Mediator has derived his appointment and all his authority from the Father. Though as God he had existence in himself, yet as Mediator he was created by the Father; that is, the Father created that office, and appointed him to it, and invested him with all the rights and authority appertaining to it. As the Father's Vicegerent he ex-

ercises the authority and administers the government belonging to God. As he acts in the Father's name and by his delegated power, and with a will in perfect accordance with his will, whatever he bestows may be considered as bestowed by the Father, and may be sought equally of the Father and the Son.

3. Although the government is committed to the Son, there is a propriety in praying to the Father. The blessings were originally his. For creatures to seek them of him alone was the natural order. And it cannot be supposed that the one living and true God is less worthy of worship because he has glorified himself by providing a Mediator. The will of the Father is active in every gift bestowed by the Son; for it is bestowed in unchanging obedience to his command, and by authority bestowed for this immutable purpose. Notwithstanding the awful purity of God,—so pure that "the heavens are not clean in his sight,"—yet a way is opened by which sinners may approach him with safety. Instead of being eternally hid behind a Mediator, he has chosen this method of grace to manifest himself most luminously to the universe, and now steadily shows "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Every reason therefore exists why prayer should be made to the Father.

4. There are reasons why the Mediator should be made the object of prayer. Not to insist on his divine dignity, he has in reward of his obedience unto death, been exalted to the dominion of the

universe. Angels, men, and devils are put under him. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without him. All the interests of the Church are in his hands. The Father, (so to speak,) has put off the weight of government upon the Son, and pushed him forward to a public station, where every eye in heaven may behold their King. The wheels of government are no longer moved by an invisible hand, but by the incarnate God,—the medium of all intercourse between God and man,—the Father's delegate, stationed on the confines of his kingdom, to receive in his name the tribute due from creatures. This honor, as the anticipated reward of his obedience unto death, was secured to him by covenant from eternity. By the same anticipation he entered on the government as soon as man fell, and as God's Vicegerent took into his hands the management of a world which he had engaged to redeem. It was he that appeared to the patriarchs; ("no man hath seen *God* at any time,") it was he that entered into covenant with Abraham, that brought his people out of Egypt, that gave the law at Sinai, that sat between the cherubims in the tabernacle and temple, that received the worship of the Church in every age as the God of Israel. Even while his manhood was toiling through the afflictions of life and was expiring on the cross, he held the corners of heaven on his shoulders and the earth in the hollow of his hand. He had "power to lay—down" his life, and he had "power to take it again." In reward of his obedience unto death he was constituted "Heir of all things." By anticipation he

took possession of the inheritance from the fall. But when he arose from the dead and ascended into heaven, he was, in a more visible and complete manner, put in possession of the whole estate. Seated on the highest visible throne in heaven, and shedding indescribable lustre from his resplendent Person, he moves the remotest planet and numbers every hair of your head. He darts an eye through the caverns of hell and spies and frustrates the most latent wile that is there conceived. From the top of heaven he looks abroad through the upper spheres and regulates all their motions. But the centre of his care is the earth on which he has left a beloved Church. Receiving the prostrate homage of seraphim and cherubim, he sends them forth as ministering spirits to his Church on earth. This Church is committed to his special care, that he may preserve and defend it and complete every part of its salvation. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." And when he has brought all his people home, and raised their bodies from the grave, and judged the world, and separated his friends and foes to their appointed places, he will resign the general kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all," while yet he retains the throne over his redeemed forever and ever.

This view of the exaltation and government of the Mediator offers a proper reason for addressing our prayers to him. To whom is it more proper to pray than to the Governor of the world? To whom is it more proper to apply for spiritual blessings, than to him who is exalted "to be a Prince

and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins?" To whom is it more proper to go for every earthly comfort, than to him who as "Heir of all things" owns the whole estate? Not a prayer has been answered since the fall, but the blessing came from the Mediator. Since the first establishment of a Church, the Father has never interfered in the government of the world, but has left it all to the Son.

5. People prayed to Christ even in the days of his humiliation; how much more should they do it now since he has sat down upon his throne? When you open the Evangelists and behold a leper, a blind man, or the parent of a lunatic at the feet of Jusus, and hear him say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,"—at the same time professing to relieve them by power derived from the Father; and when you hear the same persons giving thanks to the Father for their relief,—you at once see that there is no discrepancy between calling on the Father and entreating the Son. Although Christ is now exalted to dominion, it is still a dominion received from the Father. Though he has exchanged the robe of mock royalty for a robe of light, and the crown of thorns for the diadem of the universe, it is Jesus of Nazareth still,—as accessible, as full of compassion, as much a distinct object of supplication,— as when he was toiling here on earth.

II. I am to consider some of the peculiar advantages of praying to Christ. I will mention three. He may be approached with *less dread;* he may be *more easily apprehended;* and the habit of praying

to him tends to impress us with the *importance of the station which he holds in Zion.*

1. Sinners may approach him with less *dread* than they ordinarily feel in approaching the invisible and incomprehensible God. When overwhelmed with the thought of the infinite Majesty of heaven and earth, and assaying to hide themselves from the dreadful glory, what relief to find the Governor of the world in their own shape, their brother, their flesh and blood, once nourished by the breasts of woman,—who ate and talked and wept with miserable men. Who will fear to approach Jesus of Nazareth, who received the blind men of Jerico and the Syrophenician woman, who wept over Lazarus and over Jerusalem, who supported the beloved John on his laboring bosom? Who will be afraid to approach the Husband of the Church, who regards her and all her members as "his own flesh," and loves her "even as himself"?

2. Prayer to Christ has the advantage of a *more easy apprehension of its object.* The mind is soon lost in an attempt to contemplate the invisible God. But a God incarnate,—a God in human shape,—a God brought down within the reach of our senses,—is an object of more easy apprehension. When you behold him on earth, and see the cures he performed and the prayers which he answered, you form easy conceptions of one who has divine ability to relieve. When you follow him to his throne in heaven, and see that it is the same Jesus who governs the world, who daily gives audience to his people on earth, the mind, no longer flitting from

image to image, rests on one who has a settled form and place. One great end of the incarnation was to bring down the infinite and incomprehensible God within the reach of human senses and finite apprehensions. In his own nature God was exalted so far above created vision, that the very angels needed some step by which they might ascend to view him,—some visible point on which their eyes might fix,—where the presence of the omnipresent God might centre,—some window through which they might look up into God,—some image of the invisible Deity on which his perfections might be instamped and made discernable by creatures.—All this is done. But those who pass by the visible God, lose the advantage of this arrangement.

3. To make Christ frequently the object of our prayers, tends to impress us with the *importance of the station which he holds in the economy of redemption.* Had he remained on earth, and we could have gone to him daily as the only one appointed to relieve our distresses, it would have been easy to view him of the first importance. But those who are in the habit of applying to him on his heavenly throne, are as deeply conscious of the part he acts as though they were applying to him on earth. They are even more conscious of it. Accustomed to approach his throne and view him reigning the universal King, actually conducting sinners to heaven and introducing them to the Father, they see his station in Zion and his influence on our salvation to be greater and more necessary than did any of those who approached him in the days of his flesh.

Did I hear you say, O that I had a Saviour present to deliver me from my sins and afflictions: O that he was on earth as he once was, that I might know where to find him, and go, as other distressed sinners went, and fall down at his feet?—This is because you do not accustom yourselves to go directly to him in prayer. Why do you not lift up your eyes to where he now sits,—still alive, still present, still attentive to every want and wish? You would not then be mourning that your enemies assault you and you have no deliverer. Why is it that some of you find it so difficult to apprehend Christ in distinction from the Father, but because you habituate yourselves to pass by the visible King and make all your addresses to the invisible God? Had you seen Christ on earth you would have found no difficulty in conceiving of him as distinct from the Father. And if you were accustomed to address your prayers directly to him in heaven, you would have no more difficulty now. You could then say, My faith has seen Jesus of Nazareth on his throne: I have been with him: I have obtained blessings from him: I have as clearly seen him to be distinct from the Father as though I had been with him at the last passover, or, (as Thomas was challenged to do,) had thrust my hand into his side.—Would you surmount the difficulty of conceiving of Christ as distinct from the Father, often read his life; follow him with an attentive eye through the different scenes of his mortal course; follow him to the cross; lose not sight of him there; pursue him as he rises from the sepulchre to his throne; gaze up-

on him there. Behold the same body, the same features. It is Jesus of Nazareth still;—as much a man, and just as much a God, as when he was on earth. Go to him as he sits enthroned, as the distressed applied to him on earth, and cry in his ears, "Thou son of David, have mercy on me." Would you have a more exalted view? Follow him again through his life: mark his love, his condescension, his reverence for the Father, (it will render even the Father more revered in your eyes,) his submission, his obedience, his venerable sanctity: then follow him to his present dignities and glories; and you will find this exercise tending greatly to strengthen both your apprehension and your adoration of the Son of God. It will be the most interesting, soothing, melting, and I will add, *purifying* train of reflections that you can pursue,—no less so than to have seen him and applied to him when on earth. It is by the hand of Jesus that you must be healed and saved. It is by a believing application to him that this healing must be obtained. This putting Christ out of view and going only to the invisible God, savors too much of natural religion and legal righteousness. A Jew would have done this, and a heathen could almost do it. It deserves serious inquiry whether this is not a principal reason why our prayers are so unavailing.—We pray often for strength to resist temptation, but it does not come. Why does it not come? There must be some defect in our prayers. Those who applied to *Jesus* when he was on earth, found no difficulty in obtaining relief. Were they blind?

their eyes were opened; were they covered with leprosy? they were cleansed. He turned none away. Would we apply to *Jesus* now, he is still the same, and *our* petitions would be no less availing. Those who neglected the Son and worshipped only the Father, were not relieved in that day.—We must go to Jesus. Renounce every other hope; put your life in your hands, and go up and "touch the hem of his garment."

Ah, when we look to heaven and behold him on the throne,—the Being who moves every wheel of providence, who fills the Church on earth, who fills all heaven with his influence, his admiration, and his fame;—when we view him the Governor, the glory, the life of the universe;—and then look around and behold some of our brethren who believe not that he ever existed, and others who own his being but reject his grace; our hearts are ready to bleed their life away. But it will not avail. *They* must hug their misery and their ruin; but *we* will cleave to Jesus our Saviour. I would rather be that bruised, dying Stephen, than to fill the throne of Nero. Had I but one wish to offer, it should be this,—to possess at last the views of this holy martyr. My God, when I lie gasping in death, may my faith behold, (though in a far humbler sense,) "the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God;" and may I breathe my last breath in saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

SERMON XII.

SELF-DENIAL.

GEN. XXII. 2.

And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Abraham was now dwelling at Beersheba, a town near the southern extremity of Canaan. The land of Moriah was the country in which Jerusalem afterwards stood, about fifty or sixty miles to the north. The place where the altar was to be erected for the sacrifice of Isaac, was on Mount Moriah, —the mount on which the temple afterwards stood, where all the sacrifices were offered from the days of Solomon to the advent of Christ; and to which Mount Calvary was appended, where, in the fullness of time, the Seed of promise, the antitype of Isaac, was to be offered for the sins of the world. An interpolation in the 14th verse, which seems to have been inserted after the temple was built, and probably by Ezra, informs us particularly where the

place was. "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." And we are told that Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah; the mount retaining the name after the surrounding country had lost it; the name being indelibly stamped upon it probably by this transaction of Abraham.

Abraham had been called out of Mesopotamia, and had left all his native scenes, led by the promise that in his seed all nations should be blessed. Notwithstanding this, he had lived until he was a hundred years old before his wife bore him a son. In this time his faith and patience were put to a severe test. At length his heart is gratified by the birth of the long expected seed. The little son in whom all the blessings are wrapped up, grows up by the side and grows fast to the heart of the doting parents. With what pleasure,—with what pious delight,—do they watch his opening virtues. How often do their fond eyes, as they follow him about, glisten with the tender tear. At length the dreadful summons comes, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." What shall the father do? With what words shall he support the sinking mother? How can he lose his only son? But this is not half. How can he shed the blood of his Isaac with his own hand? What then will become of the promise that in Isaac his seed shall be called? But none of these things stagger the faith or retard the obedience of the pious patriarch. Confident that

God is "able to raise him up even from the dead," he makes no delay. He vents none of his cares either to the mother or the son. He arises *early* in the morning, takes his son and some servants, and puts the wood for the burnt offering on an ass, and sets off on foot for the place. "On the third day" he lifted "up his eyes and saw the place afar off;" and leaving there the ass with the servants, he laid the wood on the unsuspecting Isaac, and proceeded toward the place. "And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" This affecting question did not shake the father's purpose. "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering. So they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar upon the wood; [the pious youth making no resistance, although of sufficient age to carry the wood for the burnt offering.] And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son." The deed was intentionally done. The knife was on the point of entering the palpitating heart; when he who in future days was to die on the same mount to save ten thousand Isaacs from death, called suddenly out of heaven and stopped the father's hand. The trial was complete, and the proof was obtained that Abraham loved his God better than his son. This done, the God

whom he served forbade the human sacrifice. And although the fame of this affair, and the great credit of Abraham for piety, introduced the practice of human sacrifices among the neighboring nations, yet God declares that such a practice never "came—into" his "heart." His only design was to try his servant, to see whether he would deny himself for him. And he was found willing to a degree that appears to us selfish creatures truly astonishing. A greater instance of self-denial was never witnessed, save when a greater Father laid his hand on a dearer son in the tragic scene of Calvary.

Abraham is called the father of the faithful, and the religion of all his sons must resemble his.—But in this specimen we discover what his religion was. It was a principle of supreme love and unreserved obedience to God, which was ready to make any sacrifice which God required. He loved his God better than his Isaac; and would rather his son should die, nay die by his own hand, than break a command of God. This is the same religion that was taught by the Founder of the Christian Church: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." Self-denial lies at the foundation of all practical religion, as supreme love to God lies at the foundation of all the religion of the heart. If we are to judge from the practice and avowed sentiments of men, the easy, liberal world do not make self-denial a constituent part of their

religion. To indulge the tastes which nature has implanted, to live as they list and enjoy life in the way that best suits them, seems the fashionable religion of the many. There is with them no struggle, no warfare, no running, wrestling, or fighting, no agonizing "to enter in at the strait gate." All is easy. The gate is wide enough for the whole world to go in abreast, budgeted with all the trumpery of Sodom. They are to sail down the easy current of unresisted nature to the paradise above. Thus they dream. But what saith the Scripture? "Mortify—your members which are on the earth." "For if ye live after the flesh ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

My object will be,

I. To explain the great duty of self-denial.

II. To adduce some arguments to enforce it.

I. I am to explain the duty of self-denial.

This duty seems to be very imperfectly understood? While some have rejected it altogether as an injurious restraint upon the nature which God has given us, others have rode on the ridge of the other extreme into all the superstitious austerities of popery. What self-denial is, may be easily explained; but to know when we practise it, or when we only deny one desire to gratify another equally selfish, is a more difficult task. As a general definition, to deny ourselves is to perform what is crossing to our natural feelings, and what we should not do did not duty and benevolence require it. But the definition needs to be more exact.

In the strictest sense of the word, self-denial is the subjection to the will of God as expressed in his word and providence, of our *personal* tastes and feelings, in distinction from those which are social; because the interest which we take in the happiness of others is not, in the first instance, *self*-interest. Our love to friends desires nothing immediately but their happiness. And yet as the happiness of every one consists in the gratification of his tastes and affections, much of our own happiness is ultimately drawn from the happiness of our friends. Therefore to subject their interest to the will of God, is, so far as our own happiness is involved, self-denial. So far as our happiness consists in the enjoyment of their society, a consent to part with them when God ordains it, is self-denial. As far as Abraham's happiness would have been affected in both ways by the death of Isaac,—a death inflicted too by his own hand,—his obedience on this occasion was an act of self-denial. But perhaps you deny that the crossing of our affection for others is self-denial. You say, the happiness of Gabriel consists in the prosperity of God's kingdom; and in promoting that prosperity he finds his own happiness: would it be self-denial in him to cease to promote that prosperity or even to consent to its destruction? This is an entirely different case. The happiness which Gabriel derives from the prosperity of God's kingdom, is not a thing which is to be subjected to God's will. It is subjection itself. Nor is it a thing which can be set up in opposition to that will or to that prospe-

rity. Surely that happiness which is drawn from the public good, cannot be erected against the public good. Nor can he be *called upon* by his Maker to *sacrifice* that happiness, because there is nothing higher than the prosperity of God's kingdom at which he can aim. There is no way in which he can sacrifice this happiness but by ceasing to love this kingdom and yielding himself up to the government of a private interest; which, instead of being self-denial, would be the very essence of selfishness. But Abraham's love to Isaac could be arrayed against the interest of God, and needed to be subjected to his will. And that subjection, so far as the parental happiness of Abraham was sacrificed, was self-denial.

But there is such a thing as sacrificing our happiness without self-denial. The drunkard sacrifices his happiness; but so far from denying himself, he produces the effect by refusing to deny a depraved appetite. The superstitious wretch who yields to self-torture, sacrifices, for the time, his happiness; but he does not deny himself; for he is merely feeding pride and self-righteousness and the hope of reward. You might as well elevate to self-denial the labors of the husbandman, or the fatigues and exposures of the soldier, or the hazards of the duellist. To feast one appetite or evil passion at the expense of another, is not self-denial. Nothing is self-denial but the subjection of our natural feelings generally to the will of God and all our interests to his interest.

There are two sets of tastes or feelings belong-

ing to human nature in its present state. One consists of those which existed before the fall, and which still remain perfectly innocent unless indulged unseasonably or to excess. The other consists of those which were introduced by the fall, and which, in every degree and modification of them, are sinful. Such are pride, malice, envy, hatred, and the like. These must, at all times and under all circumstances, be crossed. There can be no religion any further than it is a self-denial in regard to these. The other set of tastes and affections which belong to human nature, comprises those which, not being introduced by the fall, are sinful only in excess, or when, by existing circumstances, we are called to deny them and do not. Such is the love of happiness. Such are all the animal appetites and the domestic affections. Such is the taste for the beauties of nature, for music, and for all those objects which would have gratified Adam in innocency. These tastes and feelings may be lawfully gratified with no other restrictions than these. When God has made express rules to regulate them, as in the case of the animal appetites, they are to be restricted by these rules. Or when God in his providence calls us to cross these propensities, we must deny ourselves. Thus Abraham was called to cross his natural affection for Isaac. Thus Paul was called to give up his ease, the happiness of a family state, and most of the common comforts of life. All these tastes and feelings become sinful when indulged to excess; every solicitation to which must be resisted. When the objects

of them are removed by the providence of God, we must not repine, but show our self-denial in cheerful submission.

In all these respects we are to deny ourselves; but beyond these limits we may not go. For a person, when not called to it by the law or providence of God, to cross his natural tastes, or in any way to afflict himself, betrays more pride and self-righteousness than any thing else. Self-love, or the love of happiness, is innocent when subjected by supreme love to God, and when opposed to no higher good; and to cross it without a sufficient cause, is an instance of superstitious austerity which is by no means guiltless. Though Abraham was praiseworthy in pursuing as far as he did the purpose of offering up his son; yet the neighboring heathen, who, from his example misunderstood, did, unbidden, sacrifice their children to Moloch, incurred enormous guilt.

II. I am to adduce some arguments to enforce the duty of self-denial.

1. It is *suitable* that we should deny ourselves in all respects in which the law and providence of God call for it. It is suitable in the nature of things that God should govern his own world, appoint all our circumstances, and arrange all our crosses; and that we should submit to them or voluntarily take them up as he appoints. The world is his property; we are his creatures; he is our sovereign, and has a right to appoint; and it is our duty to submit however crossing to the flesh. He is infinitely benevolent and wise, and full of mercy, and always

faithful; and there is reason for unbounded joy that he is on the throne and that we are in his hands. It is our greatest privilege to be ruled by him. And for us to refuse to be governed by his laws and to take up our cross at his bidding, is folly and ingratitude and rebellion in the highest degree.

2. His *commands* to self-denial are explicit and urgent. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Shall we be conscientious not to break any of the commands of the two tables, and have no scruples in regard to this? Hear and remember: "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

3. Without a principle that will lead us to deny ourselves habitually and in all respects for Christ, we have no religion. This comes from high authority. "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." What manner of love is that compared with which the tenderest charities of social life are hatred? Yet such love to Christ we must possess, (it comes from his own lips,) or we have no part in him. We must have for him that clearly supreme affection which will not stand wavering whether to make trifling sacrifices for his cause. The father of the faithful did not hesitate a moment whether to sacrifice his beloved Isaac; and shall we demur about giving up trifling objects, and yet rank ourselves

among the children of Abraham? It is all mistake and ruinous deception. Those who will not sacrifice every worldly interest when called to it, are unworthy to be reckoned among the children of Abraham or of God; both of whom spared not their own, their only son. In times of ease, when nothing is required to be given up, the selfish heart may easily lie concealed, and feel good-natured towards God and man. It is when sacrifices are called for that we are to discover what our hearts are. If at such times we find no self-denying principle within us; or though there be some faint movements that way, if we find no controlling propensity to give up everything for Christ as fast as he calls for it; of what avail are all our fancied submission and our supposed supreme love to God which in easier times flattered our hopes? A man never knows himself till called to make important sacrifices for Christ. Abraham never had a full opportunity to discover what his heart was, till put upon this trial. And if this experiment had evinced that he could not deny himself for God, it would have proved, notwithstanding all his former fair appearances, that he had other objects of supreme regard. The same in respect to us. What we are, is to be determined, not in times of ease and pleasure, but in times of trial. When the hour of trial comes, then may we expect that the eyes of interested angels will be fixed upon us, to see whether we can bear the test, or whether all our fair appearances will vanish away. How many eager eyes from heaven, may we suppose, followed the pa-

triarch all the way from Beersheba to Moriah, and watched him in the critical moment, to see whether his purpose would falter, or whether his faith and love would triumph over all the tendernesses of nature. How desirable that when the furnace is prepared and the hour to try men's souls has come, "the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire," should "be found unto praise and honor and glory."

4. God is able to recompense us abundantly, even in the present life, for all the sacrifices we make for him. He commands all the springs of comfort in the universe. He can make up for all the losses we sustain on his account, in ten thousand ways which human reason could not devise. We may rest assured that it will never be to our disadvantage to deny ourselves for him. He never calls us to self-denials from a wish to abridge our comforts. It is not in his heart to grudge his creatures their enjoyments. It is from far different motives that he calls us to self-denial. It is to wean us from the world and to inure us to look on him as the supreme good. What did Abraham lose by his self-denial on Moriah? Instead of being deprived of his son, he obtained a more ample charter of all the blessings before promised. And when Peter said to his Master, "Lo we have left all and have followed thee,—Jesus answered, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he

shall receive a hundred fold now in this time,—and in the world to come eternal life." It is not the way to lose our comforts to give them up to God; but to reserve them when God calls for the sacrifice, this is the way to have them blasted and removed. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's the same shall save it." Self-denial therefore, instead of being a loss, is our highest gain. And the selfish man who would break a Gospel precept to promote his own interest, takes the readiest way to destroy himself.

5. A greater motive than this, which cannot fail to affect the benevolent heart, is, that the eternal happiness of millions may be promoted by our self-denials. How much greater is the interest which is thus advanced, than the trifling good which is thus given up. The pleasures and profits which we renounce for the Gospel's sake, are transient at the longest and trifling at their greatest value. And how can these compare with the immortal interests of God's immense kingdom, which in some way or other are promoted by every instance of genuine self-denial. I had almost said, how can self-denial be any longer self-denial under this animating thought? To the real Christian it would be the greatest sacrifice of feeling not to deny his propensities which stand in competition with this infinite good.

6. If these thoughts are not sufficient to move us, one more remains which surely must melt a rock. How amazingly did the Son of God deny himself

for us. "Though he was rich, yet for" our "sakes he became poor, that" we, "through his poverty, might be rich." Though possessed of infinite happiness, he became "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Though adored by angels, he came down to receive the spittings of Roman soldiers. He cast away the diadem of the universe to wear a crown of thorns. And all this that you and I might be snatched from eternal torments and share in the immortal happiness of God himself. What soul that is fit to be called human, will not take fire at this thought? Shall we think it much to give up our toys for him who sacrificed his glory, his blood, and his life for us? The ingenuous heart must surely feel it a privilege to testify its gratitude by any form of self-denial. Every opportunity for sacrifices will be the subject of thanksgiving rather than of complaint.

> "Well thou mayst claim that heart of me
> Which owes so much to thine."

7. Thus have the faithful felt in every age. The history of the Church from the beginning is a history of self-denials. Abraham could leave his native scenes, and the pleasant plains of Mesopotamia, and all his kindred, and the delights of refined society, to consume his life in a foreign wilderness, among unsociable strangers. Moses could give up all the honors of the house of Pharaoh, and all the treasures of Egypt, "to suffer affliction with the people of God" in the deserts of Arabia. Paul could renounce the highest prospects in his nation, for reproaches, stripes, imprisonment, and death.

And the time would fail me to tell of the many others who were famed for signal sacrifices in all the days of old. And in our times, the whole family of Christians are constantly struggling with self-denials. It is the great business of their lives. In more irresolute moments we may think our sacrifices and crosses greater than those of others, and may repine at the hardness of our lot. But the trials of Christians are perhaps more equally apportioned than is often imagined. If not, of this we may be sure,—they are exactly apportioned to the necessities of each. Could we have a full and particular view of the Church militant, with all its secrets disclosed, we should have a view of a great family dispersed through the world, all in their respective spheres struggling with self-denials. Not one would be found unemployed. We should perceive their struggle to be daily and almost ceaseless, and at times each supposing his own trials the most severe. This is the universal conflict of Zion from age to age; a conflict for which we were placed in this vale of tears. We were stationed here, not to rest, but to toil; not to possess our inheritance, but to make sacrifices: and our rest and reward are to come after we "have borne the burden and heat of the day." This is the condition of the whole, immense family of our brethren; and why should we be more exempt or more at ease than they?—For shame let us not seek to repose in ignominous sloth, when all our brethren are daily toiling and struggling in their work. Let us not sink under the apprehension that we stand alone in these trials.

There is abundance of company with us. All who have entered on the heavenly journey stand with us. The trials of Zion are in a measure common.

In view of all these reasons, let us all, as we are called to it, take up our cross and follow Christ. There is no other way to follow him but to the cross, for he went no other way. By that cross let the world be crucified to us and us to the world. We must bear the cross if we would wear the crown. Let us commit all our interests to the divine management, in readiness cheerfully to endure whatever *he* shall impose who for us agonized in Gethsemane and Golgotha, and to resign whatever *he* shall require who gave up heaven and life for us. Let us never consent to exchange the trials which he has prepared, for thrones and kingdoms. "By patient continuance in well doing" through all self-denying scenes, let us "seek for glory and honor and immortality." And it shall "be no grief unto" us "nor offence of heart" when we come to stand on the everlasting hills, by the side of the fountain of life, inhaling immortal joys, and looking back on the trials of the wilderness. When we shall receive the high rewards of faith and patience, and find heaven the sweeter for all the deprivations of this life, it will be no grief to us that we renounced the pleasures and portion of the wicked, and continued faithful amidst all sufferings and crosses. O that the glorious prospects of eternity might smooth down all the ruffles of our impatient minds,—might nerve us with fortitude to meet all the evils with which human life is beset, to bear all with patience,

and into the hands of God to give up all our interests with filial submission. Let "none of these things move" us, "neither" let us "count" our own "life dear" to us, "so that" we may "finish" our "course with joy." And then "our light affliction which is but for a moment," will work "for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," Finally, let us be supported and encouraged by the affectionate address of the risen Saviour to the church of Smyrna: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Amen.

SERMON XIII.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD.

GEN. v. 24.

And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Enoch was the father of the long lived Methuselah and the great grand father of Noah. It is said of him that he walked with God after the birth of Methuselah, three hundred years. It was a long time for a man to support a holy life and communion with God without any relapse worthy of notice. It is difficult for Christians now to do this for a single day: how remarkable then that he should have done it for the long space of three hundred years. Such approbation did his extraordinary piety gain him, that when the time came for him to leave the world, God translated him, as he afterwards did Elijah, and suffered him not to taste the bitterness of death; perhaps to show mankind what he would have done for them had they never sinned.

We have many strong featured characters drawn in history. Some shine in all the brilliancy of martial achievements, and are renowned for the conquest of kingdoms. Others have gathered laurels in the paths of science and illumined the world with the scintillations of their genius. Others by their counsels have swayed the fate of empires. And the deeds of these have been loudly sounded by the trump of fame. But more is said in praise of this man of God in the few short words of our text, than is said of them all. A greater character is given him in four words, than is ascribed to the most renowned warriors and statesmen by the whole voice of history and poetry.

There is something very expressive in the phrase, "walked with God." The Christian life is frequently called a walk, and believers are exhorted to "walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise." It is called walking *before* God. "Remember now how I have walked before thee in truth." The figure of walking before God was drawn perhaps from the position of those who worshipped in the tabernacle and temple. The Shekinah or visible glory of God sat enthroned on the mercy seat. The worshippers stood in the outer court directly before the Shekinah. Hence the common expression of appearing before God in public worship. To walk before God meant then to lead a life of devotion. But "Enoch walked *with* God." I do not find this character ascribed to any but Enoch and Noah. I will,

I. Explain what is meant by this figure.

II. Show the consequences of walking with God.

III. State the prominent means by which such a walk can be kept up.

I. I am to explain the figure.

It seems to be expressive of something more intimate than the phrase to walk *before* God. We all know what it is for two friends to walk together, engaged in close and interesting conversation.—And this is the figure by which is represented the intercourse of Enoch with his God for three hundred years. The figure is well adapted. The hidden life of the Christian, his retired habit of devotion, his separation from the world, (living, as it were, in the other world while dwelling in this,) his daily, intimate, unseen communion with God, are very fitly represented by two intimate friends walking together, engrossed with each other, unmindful of all the world besides, unseeing and unseen.

This general thought comprehends several particulars.

1. When two friends thus walk together their communion is *secret*. So is the communion between the Christian and his God. The world wonder what the Christian finds to employ himself about when alone. They wonder what supports him under trials, and renders his countenance cheerful when they looked for sadness. Let them know then that he draws his comforts from another world; that he lives far away from this, where the changes and trials of the present state do not reach him. As well might they wonder whence Abraham and

David derive their present joys, while clouds are darkening the world below.

2. When two friends thus walk together, their *conversation is kind and sweet.* So the man who walks with God pours into his Father's ear all his desires and complaints, and receives his kind and comforting answers in return.

3. When two friends thus walk together their *wills and governing feelings are the same;* for how "can two walk together except they be agreed?" They also keep the same course, and thus are advancing towards the *same object.* So the man who walks with God is conformed to him in moral character. Benevolence reigns in his heart, and his open arms embrace the universe. Like God, his feelings are in accordance with the holy law. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. His object too is the same with his. The glory of his Father, the prosperity of Zion, and the happiness of the universe, constitute the one indivisable object of his pursuit. He is delighted with the government of God, and has no controversy with him who shall reign. His will is swallowed up in the divine will. He wishes not to select for himself, but in every thing chooses that his heavenly Father should select for him. He is "careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving," makes his "requests—known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding," keeps his heart and mind "through Christ Jesus."

There are two other things implied in walking

with God which are not exactly suggested by the figure.

1. The man who walks with God walks *humbly*. God will not walk with him else; for "the proud he knoweth afar off." The whole of man's duty is summed up in doing justly, in loving mercy, and in walking "humbly" with his God. The Christian, with all his intimacy with his Maker, does not approach him with familiar boldness, but is the more abased the more he sees of him. "I have heard of thee," said Job, "by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

2. The man who walks with God exercises a living faith. This, according to the apostle, was the main spring of all those graces which gained to Enoch the reputation of walking with God. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not found because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God: but without faith it is impossible to please him."

II. I am to show the consequences of walking with God.

1. By thus walking with God the soul contracts a holy intimacy with him. The consequence is,

2. That it makes advances in the best of all knowledge, the knowledge of God. An intimate walk with God affords an opportunity to study his character, to see it developed in the free communications he makes, and to listen to his instructions. He is the great instructer of mankind; but his

teachings are not extended to those who live estranged from him.

3. This closer inspection and clearer discernment of God, are the most powerful means to sanctify the soul. Views of God are transforming. While "with open face" we behold "as in a glass the glory of the Lord," we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Therefore,

4. A sure consequence of such an intimacy between God and the soul, is an increased mutual affection. The more the soul knows of God the more it will love him, and of course the more it will be beloved. What a most tender friendship did Enoch and Enoch's God contract for each other during their intimate communion for three hundred years. If we would enjoy the same blessedness, we must, like Enoch, walk with God.

5. Such an intimacy between God and the soul cannot fail to establish mutual confidence. The more God is seen the more securely can the soul commit the management of all its interests to him, and venture its everlasting all upon the truth of his word. On the other hand the more this confidence is found, the more God can confide in such a soul. He will not trust those to whom he can say, "I know you not;" but of those who are intimate with him and confide in him, he will say, "Surely they are my people, children that will not lie." It is the greatest happiness to feel this confidence in God and to know that he has this confidence in us. If we covet this, let us walk with him.

6. Such an intimacy with God will preserve us

from bad company. A man who is walking with an honorable friend, is not likely to be annoyed by disagreeable intruders or to break away after low society. When the soul is in the immediate presence of God, neither sin nor Satan dares to invade; neither the world nor any of its perplexing cares will venture to intrude. Every Christian knows what distressing and dangerous companions these are. If we would avoid them and more fully enjoy the profitable and delightful society of Enoch's God, we must do as Enoch did.

7. Another consequence of such a close walk with God is, that we shall find support under the unavoidable trials of life. When we are in distress, very soothing is the company of a prudent and sympathizing friend, who, from the stores of his knowledge, can suggest subjects of consolation. But how much more blissful the society of God, whose heart is all tenderness, and who can open to the soul the most comforting of all truths. There is no consolation like this. Indeed it is well worth while to be a while in the furnace, for the sake of walking there with one in "the form of—the Son of God."

8. Another consequence of walking with God is the enjoyment of his protection. Myriads of enemies and dangers swarm in all the way to heaven; but while God is near he will not suffer them to annoy us. When one of Enoch's spirit hears the thunders at a distance, his refuge is nearer than the danger, and he steps in and is safe. He hides himself where no evil or enemy, though searching for him throughout the world, can find him.

9. Another consequence of walking with God is, that we shall always have a faithful monitor at hand, to throw in timely cautions to keep us back from indiscretions and sin or to reclaim us when we have wandered. The conscience of one who walks with God is preserved tender, and God is faithful not to suffer a son who cleaves to him to err by his side without rebuke. To possess such a monitor is one of the greatest blessings of life. Let those who would enjoy this exalted privilege, take care never to depart from the side of their Saviour and their God.

10. Another consequence of walking with God is an enlightened view of his providence and government, a clear discernment of the glories of the heavenly world, and a peaceful assurance of his eternal love. Tell me what is happiness if this is not. What, of all the enjoyments of the world, can be *exalted* happiness compared with this?

11. Another effect of walking with God is a higher enjoyment of ordinary blessings. By the placid love which by this means is kept alive, the mind is put in a frame to enjoy every other comfort. And the gratitude which is thus mingled with the enjoyment of God's gifts, renders them all the sweeter.

12. Another effect of walking with God is a greater preparation for usefulness. In proportion as the mind becomes wiser by converse with God, and holier by near and transforming views of him, it is fitted for stronger and more persevering and better directed efforts for the happiness of others. In proportion as its faith and benevolent desires

are enlarged, its prayers will be mighty for the salvation of men. Its very breath will penetrate their conscience and their heart as no other means can do. And it will throw out upon the world the all commanding majesty and winning sweetness of a holy example. One such man will have more influence upon the order of society and the salvation of men, than millions who never walked with God.

13. Another consequence of walking with God is a peaceful death. In Enoch's case it was not death, but a triumphant translation. And in every other case, in proportion as a man has walked with God, his end, though he leaves his body behind, is still triumphant, or at least serene. How unspeakable a comfort, when one is struggling with the king of terrors and about to enter on eternal and unchangeable scenes, to have "the full assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost." How much better than to sink under awful fears of eternal wrath, or even under doubts which leave the soul to measure over the dark valley alone. Would you enjoy this triumph, or even this serenity in death, you must prepare for it by walking with God.

Finally, another consequence of walking thus closely with God, is an enlarged share of immortal glory. In heaven the blessed inhabitants all walk with God, every day and hour. And they find it no burden but a happiness which they would not exchange for the whole creation. Why was it not then a happiness on earth? And yet for an exemplary march in that happy course, millions have

found their blessedness eternally increased. The enhanced joy of a single soul for a few hours, will outweigh all the pleasures of all the wicked on earth. The time will come when that additional blessedness of a single soul, will have out-measured all the happiness enjoyed on earth from Adam to the conflagration. A little further, and it will have exceeded all the happiness enjoyed by saints and angels in heaven before the day of judgment. And further still,———but imagination faints and turns back from the pursuit, and can only exclaim, How infinite the good resulting from one degree of additional faithfulness.

From the weight of all these reasons for a close walk with God, I hope you are now prepared to give your whole attention while,

III. I state the prominent means by which such a walk can be kept up.

Humility and faith, as we have already seen, are not means merely, but are involved in the very idea of a walk with God. Without these we cannot approach God, much less walk with him. The same may be said of obedience generally. These in the inquiry are not considered so much in the light of means, as a part of the walk which means are to keep up. And yet *particular acts* of disobedience may be mentioned as things to be avoided and particular acts of faith may be named as means to be employed. The means involve two things,—the guarding against what is injurious and the attending to what is useful.

I. The guarding against what is injurious.

(1.) It is absolutely impossible to preserve the soul in the habit of conversing with God, without avoiding improper conversation with men; not only every thing false or impure or profane or malicious or revengeful or passionate, but every thing deceitful or slanderous or uncharitable or uncandid or vain. It is even said "that every *idle* word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

(2.) Vain thoughts are another hindrance to an intimate walk with God. This led the pious Psalmist to say, "I hate vain thoughts." There cannot exist a great degree of spirituality, unless the mind is habitually employed in spiritual contemplations. People who consume most of their leisure hours in thoughts of vanity, do not walk with God. It betrays a heart full of idolatry: and as well might the worshippers of Baal claim to walk with Israel's God. These cold thoughts diffuse chills of death through all the soul, and can no more comport with its spiritual activity, than paralysis can comport with the activity of the body.

(3.) No known sin must be indulged. One such Achan fostered in our camp, will prove that we have not only no intimacy with God, but no acquaintance with him. One indulged sin is as decisive against us as a hundred. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

(4.) Undue worldly affections and cares must be excluded. Those affections for the world are undue which are not constantly subjected to the love of God; that is, are not ready, at all times, cheerfully to submit to the rules which he has made to regulate our use and management of the world, and to any sacrifices which his providence may extort from us or require at our hands. And those cares are undue which, from their number or pressure, seduce the heart from God. Every worldly care necessarily draws the *attention* from God for a season, as we cannot fixedly attend to two things at once. But if the *heart* is not enticed away, the thoughts and affections will spontaneously return to him at every interval of care and with ever fresh delight. Those affections and cares which, according to these definitions, are undue, obstruct our communion with God and abate our intimacy with him. Of course they must be guarded against if we would walk with him.

These are the things to be studiously avoided. And now,

2. Let us see to what we must attend.

(1.) We must punctually and earnestly attend on all the means and ordinances of God's appointment. Any neglect or irregularity or carelessness in this attendance, will cut the sinews of our spirituality, and diminish our strength to achieve victories and resist temptations in future. Separate yourselves from means, and you may as well separate your fields from culture, and even from the rain and dews of heaven. All our light and grace come

through the medium of means. This in general; but to be more particular,

(2.) We must pray the prayer of faith and "pray without ceasing." Prayer is the Christian's life. Though every other ordinance be attended to, yet if this one be neglected, all is in vain. It is as impossible for the soul to be spiritually alive and active without a punctual course of fervent and believing prayer, as for the body to be alive and active without breath. Prayer has more influence on the sanctification of the soul than all other ordinances. It is going directly to God to receive the life-giving Spirit according to an absolute and often repeated promise. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him." This is decisive if any language can be. The promise is absolute, and there must be an unwavering belief in the promise in order to give the application success. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a

wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." But the faith inculcated is not a belief that *I* shall receive, but that I shall receive *if* I ask aright. It is not a belief in *my* goodness, but in God's truth. It is a firm, unwavering, confident belief that God will "give the holy Spirit to them that ask him" *aright*. This strong confidence in God's truth may be exercised whatever doubts we have of our own goodness or election. If we are troubled on these points it ought not to keep us back. We may leave them to be decided afterwards, and go right to God with unlimited confidence in his truth and consequent willingness to hear the cries of all who sincerely seek him. Whoever is elected, this is true of all. Say not, God will hear me if I am elected, and not without.—Election or no election, he certainly will hear the cries of all, (be it Judas or be it Peter,) who seek him with the whole heart. This ought to be the strong confidence of every man, whatever opinion he may have of his own character or destiny. This, as the apostle testifies was the faith of Enoch.—"Before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe [what? that he himself is good? that he himself is elected? no such thing: must believe] that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," There is a full chance then for doubting Christians to exercise this sweet and successful confidence in God. Tell it to the nations.

Let the joyful tidings circulate, through all the region of despondency and gloom. There is no confidence required of you respecting your goodness or election. The only faith demanded is to "believe" in God, "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," whoever they are,—whether it is I or another man,—elect or non-elect.

(3.) We must watch. In that most trying moment when the powers of hell were let loose upon the suffering Saviour, he gave his disciples no other direction than this, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." So much emphasis did he lay on these two duties. In regard to watchfulness, I would suggest the following rules.

First, be vigilant to observe the first motions of the enemy. If he has made considerable advances before you move, your exertions will probably be too late. It is dangerous to parley with temptation. Check it early or it will probably prevail. Keep all your eyes open to watch the different avenues by which the enemy makes his approach. He will often vary his mode of attack. Through all his variations keep your eye steadfastly upon him. Acquaint yourselves with his numerous devices.

Secondly, watch another enemy greater than this;—watch your own heart. Keep an attentive eye upon the movements of corruption within you: otherwise some evils will gather too much strength for you to resist; others will work unseen, and go in to form your character unknown to yourselves.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

Thirdly, watch opportunities for doing and getting good. Much is lost in reference to both by overlooking the favorable moment.

Fourthly, watch the motions and expressions of divine providence. It will throw much interesting light on the character and government of God and illustrate and confirm many things taught in the Scriptures.

Fifthly, watch the motions of the Spirit upon your minds. Sometimes the Spirit whispers an invitation to prayer or divine contemplation. If the suggestion is followed we may find the duties easy and pleasant, and the effect lasting. But perhaps we refuse to attend to the impulse. The consequence is, our hearts grow cold and lifeless; and then though we attempt to pray or meditate, we find no relish for it. This remark goes no part of the way towards denying God's efficiency, but only assumes that he leaves us sometimes by way of punishment. It may be illustrated by a passage from the Song of Solomon, understood to relate to the intercourse between Christ and the Church. The Spouse, half aroused from lethargy, says, "I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew and my locks with the drops of the night. [Now mark how her indolence pleads.] I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

[Now the heavenly Bridegroom makes a more effectual effort.] My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. I rose up to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. I opened to my Beloved, but, [see the effect of not opening to Christ at first,] my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone: my soul failed when he spoke: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him but he gave me no answer." This is enough to confirm my idea of watching and obeying the first suggestion of the Spirit of Christ.

I have thus shown what it is to walk with God, the blessed consequences, and the means. May I not now, my Christian brethren, urge upon you this delightful duty? It is what you owe to the blessed God, your Father and Saviour, who has astonished heaven by his kindness to you, and whose mercies, if you are not deceived, will hold you entranced to eternity. It is what you owe to him, and it will secure you a happy life, more than all the wealth and honors of the world. It is heaven begun below. Do you not wish to be happy? Bend all your cares then to walk with God. Be not satisfied with a *general desire* to do this, but fix systematically on the means prescribed. Pursue those means hourly, daily, yearly. Reduce your life to a system under the regulation of these rules. Good old Enoch could walk with God three hundred years. And he has never seen cause to repent it. Could you have access to him in his glory, would

he express regret for the pleasant mode of spending the last three hundred years of his life? We are apt to think that we are not expected to aim at the superior piety of the ancient saints. But why paralyze every power by such a stupefactive mistake? Are we not under as great obligations? Is not God as worthy of obedience now as in the days of old? Have the increased displays of his mercy in the Gospel impaired his claims? Has the affecting scene of Calvary rendered him less lovely in the eyes of sinners? Are the means used with mankind less than in the patriarchal age? Or are the happy consequences of a walk with God worn out by time? Why should we then content ourselves with being scarcely alive, when so many saints have been through life rapt in communion with God? Do we thirst for honors? What honor so great as to be the companion and son and favorite of the everlasting God? Do we wish for riches? Who so rich as the heir of him who owns all the treasures of the universe? Do we prize the best society? What better society can be found than Enoch had? Does any valuable consideration move us, or any ingenuous motive, O let us never cease to walk with God. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

WHEN I AM WEAK THEN AM I STRONG.

II. Cor. xii. 10.

Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong.

In Paul's absence from Corinth, false apostles had crept in, who charged him, among other things, with being a hireling, because he received a partial support from the churches. This put him upon vindicating himself and his ministry: and the supreme modesty with which he performed this task, is an example for all apologists for themselves. He does not boast of his heavenly call, his high authority, his many miracles, his superior eloquence, his unrivalled piety, and his equally unrivalled usefulness. If he must glory he chooses to glory in his infirmities, as attesting both his own sincerity and the power of Christ in the success of his ministry.

By infirmities and weaknesses he means the same,

and comprehends under them, not only his general insufficiency for the salvation of men,—not only his feebleness of body,—but the hunger, thirst, nakedness, watchings, weariness, reproaches, and persecutions, which he endured for Christ. The manner in which he boasts of these infirmities, will appear from the following specimens. "We are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men.—Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place, and labor, working with our hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things unto this day." "We have this treasure in earthern vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our body." "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God; in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet

true; as unknown, and yet well known as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more: in labors more abundant, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep: in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not? If I must needs glory I will glory of the things which concern my infirmities." Having then mentioned one, (meaning himself,) who had been "caught up to the third heaven," he adds, "Of such a one will I glory, yet of myself I will not glory but in my infirmities." And having alluded to the thorn in his flesh, (supposed to have been an impediment in his speech brought on him by his persecution at Lystra,) and to his thrice repeated prayer for its removal, he proceeds to state the answer and the effect on his own mind. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for

my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then am I strong."

Thus his being an earthern vessel, by which the power of God was manifested in his success; his thorn in the flesh, which removed him still further from the possibility of accomplishing any thing himself; his poverty, reproach, and extreme suffering; his subjection to the will of his enemies, against whom he had no power to protect himself;—(all which, while it attested his sincerity, showed him, not as a mighty conqueror marching through the the world and prostrating nations by the power of his own arm, but as a weakling subduing the armored champions with a sling and a stone, in the name of the God of the armies of Israel;—all which, while it brought to his own mind a sense of other insufficiency and dependance, manifested to others the power of Christ in the triumphs of the Gospel:) his hunger, thirst, weariness, and exposure to every danger; which showed him, not a giant fortified with inherent strength, but a poor feeble worm unable to sustain himself: that violent persecution, which, borne with unresisting meekness and triumphant faith, proved the means, by convincing thousands, of extending the kingdom of Christ: that rupture with mankind,—that dissolution of alliance with the world,—by which was wrought in him a deadness to the things of time and

sense and a vigorous life of faith :—these were the infirmites in which he delighted, as means to awaken in himself a sense of his own nothingness and dependance and to carry him out to Christ,—as means to render the power of his beloved Saviour more manifest in his support and success.

To what a high and heroic frame had this holy man arrived, that he could *take pleasure* in infirmities, reproaches, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake. It is as much as ordinary Christians can do to *submit* to these things. But to *take pleasure* in them,—to consider them no longer a misfortune but a constituent part of prosperity,—a source, not of misery, but of joy; this is passing strange. How far is religion, in her loftier flights, above the operations of nature. Ask the men of the world in what they take delight, and they will tell you, In the absence of all sorrow,—in the approbation of all around us,—in the highest portion of worldly good. But here is one who takes pleasure in reproaches, in want, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. Happy man! he is proof against all the evils which are such a terror to others. All the ills of life have lost their power on him. The curse which smote this vale of tears is to him repealed. He has nothing more to fear for time or eternity. What is bane to others proves meat and drink to him. The greatest troubles only increase his joy. He has found indeed the philosopher's stone which turns every thing to gold. I have heard of heroes who could support misfortune *without complaint;* but never, till Christianity showed them

to me, did I hear of men who could *take pleasure* in affliction,—who could take pleasure in *such a catalogue of woes* as has been recited.

The reason which the apostle gives for this marvellous joy, is contained in a still more marvellous paradox; "When I am weak then am I strong." This, on every principle of *nature*, is not only a paradox but a falsehood. But grace and nature are just so opposite. In the kingdom of grace men ascend by lying down, conquer by submitting, save their life by losing it, and are the strongest when most weak.

In this paradox there is a double meaning. The first meaning is, I take pleasure in being an earthern vessel, in having a thorn in the flesh, and in undergoing all these degradations and sufferings for Christ, because they give opportunity for his power to be glorified in me. When they press upon me most, his strength is most conspicuous in my support. I never feel my graces so active nor my spiritual joys so high, as when I am suffering for his sake. This truth is illustrated in the history of that apostle. When did he ever sing so rapturously as when he and Silas lay bound and mangled in the inner prison? And his ascent to the third heaven is thought to have been at the time when his body lay overpowered under the persecutions at Lystra. This accords with the ordinary experience of Christians. "A child of God," says one, "seldom walks so much in the view of God as his God, as when, in his outward circumstances, he walks in darkness and sees no light." This is eminently the

case when his sufferings are for the cause of God. When were the three children in Babylon visited by a heavenly guest, but when they were walking in the furnace for their adherence to the truth? When did Daniel experience so much of the care of his God, as when, for his fidelity to him, he was in the lions' den? And when are ordinary Christians so strong in their faith and patience, in their hopes and joys, as when they are suffering for Christ?

But the paradox contains another meaning, to which the transition is easy. When I most *feel* my own weakness and go out to Christ for strength, then am I the most strong. This meaning must have lain by the side of the other in the mind of such a man as Paul. He could not have been weak under the pressure of outward trials, without a corresponding *sense* of his insufficiency and dependance. In his case the two ideas were inseparable, and they must be considered inseparable in the declaration of the text. It is as though he had said, I take pleasure in all my sinless infirmities and trials; for when these press upon me, then I most *feel* my own weakness, and this carries me out to Christ and casts me upon his strength; so that I am never so strong in the power and grace of my Redeemer, nor the occasion of glorifying these attributes so much, as when, from the pressure of outward afflictions, I most *feel* my own weakness.

A proud dependance on ourselves,—that stiffness which will not dissolve into the feelings of a child dropping into a parent's arms,—is the great ob-

struction to our salvation. On the other hand, that conscious feebleness, guiltiness, meanness, nothingness, which looks up to the grace and power of God as the only ground of salvation; which rests on him as the heart that dictates and the arm which executes every part,—as the Deliverer who first planned to pluck us from the pit, and performs what he planned,—as the Father who pardons us, not for any thing in us, but for reasons existing in the glorious Trinity,—as the Sanctifier who hourly renews our strength,—as the arm which clears our way and guides and carries us along,—as the Shepherd that gathers us in his arms and carries us in his bosom;—this it is to be weak,—this it is to be strong.

The name of God is ushered into our world, in the first chapter of Genesis, as the Covenanters; for that is the meaning of the Hebrew word translated God.* "In the beginning the Covenanters created the heaven and the earth:"—created them for the theatre of that redemption which had been settled by covenant from eternity. Before man was formed or angels made, the Covenanters, from the boundless benevolence of the Godhead, undertook the salvation of this world,—undertook to draw out from their own fulness all that was necessary to complete the amazing work,—undertook to make atonement,—to call, awaken, convert, and pardon sinners, to sanctify, protect, and save believers, to begin, carry on and complete the salvation of every one of the elect. The righteousness, strength, and universal

* See Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicon under אלה

guardianship, are not only freely tendered, but secured by a determinate choice,—by a purpose of earnest love which will not be disappointed: like a mother who originates all the arrangements respecting her weak and froward infant, forces upon it her effectual care, and leaves nothing to depend on its own wisdom or strength. You have heard from the records of his grace, how the heavenly Leader goes before his people, clears their way, spreads about them his protecting shield, supports them when faint, strengthens them when weary, stimulates them when sluggish, reclaims them when wayward, keeps off their enemies, keeps down their corruptions, is himself the first mover in every step they take,—the ground and dispenser of their pardon,—the defender who stands answerable for their protection against every foe and danger,—the manager of all their minor interests, who daily executes with his own hand the three great promises, that no evil shall befall them, that no good shall be withheld from them, that all things shall work together for their benefit. When he sees they need strength, he gives it,—gives it of his own accord, and gives them strength to ask it. When he sees they need wisdom, he gives it,—pardon, he gives it,—solace, worldly good, affliction, he gives it all. All their springs are in him. Nothing originates in their prayers; their prayers originate in him. Nothing originates in their prudence; their prudence originates in him. He worketh all their works in them. When they cannot guide themselves, he takes the business out of their hands. He blocks up their

way and deranges their plans and turns them back sorely against their will, and, heedless of their frettings and cryings, saves them in spite of themselves. All this is provided in the everlasting covenant.—*That* is our anchor of hope.

> "Amidst temptations sharp and long,
> My soul to this dear refuge flies."

We are weak, but he is mighty. We are foolish, guilty, rebellious, but he is our "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." We have no other way but to cast ourselves into his arms as helpless infants. In all our conflicts, in all our guilt, we can only resort to God's strength, to God's grace, to God in Christ as our all in all.

And this is the spirit which it is our life to cherish. This is the weakness by which we are made strong. We never shall cease to lean upon ourselves till we despair of our own strength. We never shall rest upon Christ till we cease to lean upon ourselves. We never shall draw strength from heaven till we rest upon Christ. Never therefore till we despair of our own strength shall we be strong in the Lord. And *in the same proportion* as we feel our utter weakness and go out of ourselves to rest on his strength, we shall be strong. He is the vine, we are the branches. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can" we "except" we "abide in" him. But the very bond of union is this dependance on him for life. In proportion as we feel this dependance, the streams of life flow from him to us; in

proportion as this sense abates, we wither like a separated branch. "He" filleth "the hungry with good things, and the rich he" sendeth "empty away."

This childlike sense of weakness and dependance is unlike that temper which sinks into sluggish repose and leaves God to do both his work and ours. Was Paul inactive while he was weak? Was ever mere man since the fall strung up to higher exertions? His "labors more abundant," his "journeying often," his "weariness and painfulness," are put into the very definition of that weakness which constituted his strength. The Christian life is not sluggish rest. We must wrestle, fight, run, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ: but the point is, to feel, in all this exertion, that we are using the strength of another. God's agency does not set aside our agency, but puts it in motion, like a wheel within a wheel. He works all our works in us; but if our works are not done, it proves that he has not wrought. We must "work out" our "own salvation,—*for* it is God which worketh in" us "both to will and to do."

This dependance is full of trust. It is not a morbid sense of weakness which resorts to God reluctantly. It is a consciousness of what we are in view of the whole work of redemption,—in view therefore of what God is in that work. It does not despair except of help from ourselves, but casts the soul on the mediation and fullness of Christ, and rises to a sweet and triumphant confidence in him.

From what has been said we learn,

1. That we have no reason to fear any affliction which may come upon us for a wise and faithful adherence to the Gospel. The weaker we are in this respect the stronger we shall be in Christ. No labors, no sacrifices, no reproaches ought to be dreaded. We should hug the cross, "and count it all joy when" we "fall into divers temptations." Do we not wish above all things to enjoy more of God and to be more like him? and shall we shrink from trials which are sent to bring us to both parts of this salvation? Instead of fearing and fearing, let us comfort our hearts and go forward with undaunted zeal to meet a world in arms.

2. We see the vital importance of an humbled child-like spirit, free from all self-sufficiency, full of a sweet sense of dependance, of filial confidence, and willing to be supported and led by a parent's care. This brings us directly to the source of all life and joy, and is the only temper that can bring us there. In this spirit of dependance and trust let us daily go forth to our work, and learn habitually to say with David, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation and my high tower." "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me."

And then from sweet experience, we may add, in the seraphic language of Isaiah, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

In all our prayers and exertions for the kingdom of Christ, let us be sure to go forth under this deep sense of weakness and absolute dependance. Without this we never shall work any deliverance in the earth. Our "strength is to sit still,"—to refrain from Egypt and Assyria and to confide in the living God. In this point chiefly he is jealous for his honor. If we ever succeed, like Elijah on Carmel, to unstop the windows of heaven, we must be far more conscious of this utter weakness and dependance than Christians ordinarily are. How much dependance, think you, Elijah placed on an arm of flesh, when he "came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant?" And when he retired to the top of Carmel "and put his face between his knees," and sent his servant seven times to look for the western cloud, how much confidence, think you, he had in that little lump of clay which was called Elijah? Could his dependance or his trust in God have been greater? And had it been otherwise, would the fire have fallen from heaven "and consumed the—sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water—in the trench"? or would the heavens have gathered blackness and poured

out abundance of rain? O my brethren, what almighty energy is wrapped up in this dependance and trust when we put our hands to the kingdom of Christ. I would say of it as David said of Goliath's sword, "There is none like that; give it me." For want of these heavenly attributes all our strength is withered, all our labor lost. We go forth like the Midianitish army and fill all the valley "as grass-hoppers for multitude;" but one shout of faith, "*The sword of the Lord and of Gideon*," will do more execution than the whole. O that this lesson might now be written with sun-beams on our heart forever, and it would do more for our usefulness in the kingdom of Christ than all other things. This is the great secret that was to be discovered; this is the grand talisman that will accomplish all things. Supported by its power, "he that is feeble—shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God." They "shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea," and "it shall be done," "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me:" and this is the heavenly amulet about the neck and heart, which conveys the power, "When I am weak then am I strong."

SERMON XV.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD.

Isai. xlix. 14–16.

But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her suckling child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.

There is a striking analogy between God's general treatment of his Church in different ages of the world, and his treatment of individual Christians in different periods of their life. The various changes which have taken place in the state of the Church, with those which are yet to come, strongly represent the changes which occur in the experiences of individual Christians.

The bondage of the Church in Egypt, its deliverance by the mighty power of God, its overflowing joy when it had safely passed the Red Sea and thought all its enemies slain, the dedication of itself to God at Sinai, the tedious wilderness it had to pass before it could cross the Jordan and rest in

the promised land; the care which God exercised over his people, to feed, guide, and defend them; the numerous enemies they had to encounter; their own fickleness, ingratitude, and rebellion; all represented, with memorable exactness, a Christian's journey from spiritual Egypt to the heavenly Canaan.

If we take a wider range and contemplate God's treatment of his Church from the first promise of a Saviour to the day of judgment, the analogy will be still more manifest. So exact it is that when the pen of inspiration is describing the joys or trials, the hopes or fears of the Church at large, individual Christians may see in the description a delineation of their own hearts. Indeed many of the prophecies and most of the promises relate equally to individuals and to the Church at large. An instance of such a double reference is seen in our text. The words may be applied both to the general Church and to all its real members.

So numerous are the evils with which this life is chequered, and so often is the light of God's countenance hid behind the cloud of unbelief, that it is not unfrequently the language of our hearts, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." And in reference to the Church at large we are too prone to say, The Lord hath forsaken and Zion's Lord hath forgotten. He who was acquainted with all our weaknesses and trials, well knew how to adapt his promises to our wants. He knew how to shape and point them so that they could make the readiest way into our hearts. How

could any assemblage of words have a greater tendency to fix a desponding mind on the faithfulness of God, than those which are used in the text?

My purpose is to adduce some arguments to confirm our faith that God will never forget nor forsake his people.

1. The spring of his love to them was in himself, and not in any moral qualities found in them: and therefore no imperfections in them will ever dry up this eternal fountain. He loved at first because it was his nature to love, and his love will continue for the same reason. In fulfilment of his covenant with Christ, his love transformed them from enemies to friends: and if their very enmity could not restrain him from beginning this good work, their remaining sin cannot prevent him from carrying it on to perfection. The apostle therefore was "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in" Christians, "will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." If the love of God was changeable, our unnumbered provocations might turn it from us; but on his immutability he himself encouraged us to build our confidence. "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." When the Christian is depressed with a sense of his own unworthiness, it is very comforting to reflect, The Lord has not loved me thus far on account of any merit in me; why then should I fear that he will cease to love me on account of my ill desert? It is his glory to love the undeserving who were given to Christ; and I have heard him say, "For my own sake, even for

my own sake will I do it; for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."

2. The efficacy of the atonement and righteousness of Christ, by which Christians were at first pardoned and adopted, remains the same: therefore they can never be forsaken. If their unworthiness could reverse the pardoning and justifying sentence, the redemption of Christ would not be complete. If matters were left thus uncertain, and the burden of keeping themselves was laid on their own shoulders, not a child of Adam would ever reach the kingdom of heaven. But blessed be God, that vicarious righteousness which was at first the ground of our pardon and acceptance, is not changed by our sins; and if on this account he can subdue and receive the sinner, surely on this account he will continue to love the saint.

3. Our faith in this delightful truth is confirmed by explicit promises. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and *will* be their God, and they *shall* be my people.—And I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever.—And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me." "The Lord is faithful who shall stablish you and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will

do the things which we command you." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

It is well for Christians that God has taken into his own hands the management of their spiritual concerns, and has himself undertaken to train them up for glory. Had he not thus taken the work to himself, we must have despaired of its being done. Every one who has learned the fickleness and treachery of his own heart, will say with David, "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had—dwelt in silence." All the encouragement of Christians is founded on his promise to keep them by his "power —through faith unto salvation." When beset with temptations they sometimes despond, but the faithfulness of God at last compels them to acknowledge, "When I said, My foot slippeth, thy mercy O Lord, held me up." Or if to show them what is in their hearts, and to bring them to a fuller reliance on the righteousness of Christ and the strength

of God, he leaves them to fall, it shall not be forever. "A just man falleth seven times and riseth up again." Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. Even the angels are made ministering spirits to the Church. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." In times of the greatest spiritual dearth they shall still be fed. The barrel of meal and the cruise of oil shall still support them while all around are perishing with famine. He who caused waters to break forth from the rock to refresh the thirsty Church, and from the jaw bone to revive the fainting prophet, has said, "When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them: I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water." Amidst all the afflictions of life God is never unmindful of his people. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." He has this excellent property of a good friend, that he never forsakes his friends in adversity. All other friends may depart, but God will not depart. "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." "We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He is sensible of all the sufferings which his members feel,

and of every injury and insult which are cast upon them. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye." In the process of the last judgment he will treat every injury and every benefit rendered to his members as rendered to himself. He has pronounced a vehement curse upon those who offend one of his little ones, and promises a magnificent reward to those who give only a cup of cold water to them as his disciples. He marks them by the most endearing titles. He calls them friends, he calls them brethren, he calls them his children, he calls them his spouse, he calls them his members, he calls them his body. After borrowing figures from relations like these to express his tenderness to his disciples we shall not be surprised to hear that he acts the part of the kindest shepherd. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." "They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

Under the special care of such a God and Saviour what can the children want? Do they need pardon? they have it. Consolation? they have it. Restraining or sanctifying grace? it is theirs. Do they stand in real need of any worldly good? God is not backward to bestow even that. "He that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" "The Lord God is a sun and shield;

the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." This sums up the whole matter. Are we in darkness? "the Lord God is a sun." Are we encompassed with enemies? "the Lord God is a— shield." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe." Do we want present sanctification or future bliss? "the Lord will give" both "grace and glory." Do we want any other comforts in our way? he will bestow even these: for "no good things will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." The inference from all this is just; "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

God will not only confer on his people the present possession of every thing really good, but he will protect them from every thing that would ultimately prove an evil. "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." And every thing which does occur shall turn to their benefit. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."— "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours." We may well exclaim then with the enraptured Psalmist, "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men."

4. The experience of all ages has borne testimo-

ny to the unfailing faithfulness of God to the Church and to all individuals who put their trust in him. The human race have now been acquainted with their Maker for almost six thousand years, and not one of them has ever found unfaithfulness in him, either towards the Church or towards any of its members. Though many Christians, through unbelief, have been ready to call his faithfulness in question, and to say, The Lord hath forsaken, and my Lord hath forgotten, yet in no instance has the gloomy apprehension been supported, but in every case God has appeared for their relief and convinced them that their jealousy was groundless and unkind.

When the Church became reduced to a single family, and the overgrown vices of a wicked generation threatened to swallow it up, report was made in heaven that the Church was in danger, and God came down and drowned the world with a flood. Every thing must give way to the safety of the Church. God revealed to Noah his purpose of drowning the world, and promised him, if he would submit to the scoffs of an unbelieving generation and rear a stupendous ark, that he and his family should be saved from the deluge. Noah believed God and ventured all upon the promise. And did God disappoint his hopes? Ask him, and he will tell you, No. When the Church was again reduced and again in danger, God separated the father of the faithful from the rest of the world, called him from his father's house, and carried him through an interesting variety of scenes, to prepare the way

for the continuance of a Church among his posterity. While the patriarchs were wandering about and carrying the little Church with them, the eyes of all heaven were upon them: angels came down to inquire into their matters, and the Mediator, the Angel of the covenant, the God of the Old Testament, came down to visit them. God told Abraham that if he would forsake his kindred and follow him, he would conduct him safely to a land flowing with milk and honey, and give it to his seed for their inheritance; that he would be his "shield and" his "exceeding great reward." Abraham ventured all upon the truth of the promise and left his father's house. And did he ever find the promise fail? Ask him, and he will tell you, No.—God told Jacob that if he would go down to Egypt, he would go with him and assuredly bring back his seed. Jacob believed, went into Egypt, and ultimately found all the promises fulfilled. He there became convinced of the unreasonableness of that despondency which a little before had said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." The good old patriarch became convinced that these things had not been against him, that his distrust had been ill founded, and that in all things God had taken the readiest way to promote his happiness. When the Church was oppressed in Egypt, God came down in wrath. I hear, says he, the cries of my sons as though they were in distress; what are ye doing to my children? His eyes beheld their oppression and he set himself to deliver them. Be-

cause Egypt refused to let them go, he smote it with ten successive plagues; and when Pharaoh pursued the retreating Church, he overthrew him and his host in the Red Sea. He would have destroyed all Egypt before he would have seen his Church detained in bondage. God promised Moses that if he would prefer "the reproach of Christ" to "the treasures in Egypt," and would conduct the Church from the land of slavery, he should have his presence and friendship for a "recompense of reward." Moses obeyed: and did God ever forsake him until the Church was brought to the borders of Canaan and he safely landed in heaven? On a certain occasion, when God was angry with his people and seemed to refuse to go with them any further, Moses interceded, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." As though he had said, Consider, Lord, the tediousness of the way and the swarms of enemies which threaten to swallow us up. What can we do without thy presence? How can we live without thy love? And now mark the gracious answer, rich as the treasures of God; which, when extended to a general application, may yield unfailing solace to all who are still entangled in the mazes of this wilderness. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." This promise was fulfilled. God went close by his side through all the windings of the wilderness, supported him under every trial, overcame all his enemies, and then received him to the rest that "remaineth—to the people of God." The Church in the wilderness frequently distrusted God,

and in their complaints charged him with falsehood: but they never could make good the charge, and by his seasonable interpositions were always made to blush at their complaints. He satisfied them with water out of the rock and fed them with "angel's food." "Their clothes waxed not old and their feet swelled not," and their "shoe" became not "old upon" their "foot," for the space of forty years. He guided them by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. He defended them miraculously from all their enemies, and could not be provoked to forsake them by all their murmurs and rebellions. A review of all this appeared so astonishing to Moses as he stood on the plains of Moab, not far from Jordan, that he exclaimed, "The Lord's *portion* is his people; Jacob is the *lot of his inheritance*. [As though he had no other estate.] He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." God promised David that he would make him king over Israel; and David for the most part believed the promise, though now and then his fears would arise and tempt him to say, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." But God made good his word in every tittle, and forced David to acknowledge, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles." And

he has not had a remaining doubt of the divine faithfulness for twenty-eight hundred years. And what shall I now say? for the time would fail me to tell of Elijah, of Daniel, and his three companions, of Ezra and Nehemiah and of the whole army of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, who by a faithful God were enabled to quench the violence of fire, to stop the mouths of lions, to quell the rage of enemies, to endure sufferings with patience, to meet death with triumph, and to enter into the joys of their Lord. Ask these happy spirits while harping around the throne, whether they ever found unfaithfulness in the holy One of Israel; and, No, No, No, would resound from all the heavens. And, my brethren, were I to appeal to your experience, which of you all can allege anything against the divine faithfulness? Your hearts may at times have distrusted God; but has he not in every instance convinced you that it was without foundation, and in a thousand cases astonished you with the most delightful evidence that he had not forgotten to be kind?

I shall conclude with a few reflections.

I. The thoughts which have been presented ought lastingly to convince us of the utter unreasonableness of those jealousies of God which every one acquainted with himself finds too frequently in his own heart. Nothing can be more unfounded than an apprehension in Christians, (while regarding themselves as such,) that he who loved them with an everlasting love, and who has done so much to redeem and sanctify them and to train them up for heaven, will after all forsake them and leave

them to be overcome by their spiritual enemies; that he will neglect to make all needful provisions for them in this life: that he will fail to bestow every real good, or that he will suffer the occurrence of any real evil. The unequivocal promise and oath of God bid them fear none of these things. Such fears then involve a charge against God of deception and perjury. And has he given a cause? The uniform testimony of six thousand years answers, No. There is no reason why we should not place unlimited confidence in him. Nothing appears why we may not, with the utmost safety, commit to him the management of all our concerns for time and eternity, with the confidence of the apostle, "that he is able to keep that which" we "have committed unto him against that day." "All the promises of God——— are yea and——— amen." They are unchangeable truths. They never yet deceived and they never will. Let us not therefore yield to anxiety on any subject, but "seek—first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," assured that if we do this, "all" other "things shall be added." Let us follow the comprehensive advice of Peter, to cast all our "care upon" God, "for he careth for" us; and not neglect the counsel of Paul respecting the things of this life: "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace

of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." All we have to do then is to commit the management of all our concerns to God, to seek first his kingdom and righteousness, to "pray without ceasing," and to "rejoice evermore."

II. Is God so mindful of us that he never turns his eye from us a single moment? How ungrateful then for us to be so unmindful of him. Though he never forgets his people, yet they daily forget him. Though his feelings towards them are such that it would be infinitely more difficult for him to forget them than for an affectionate mother to forget her darling infant, yet they suffer the least thing to draw their minds from him; yea they sometimes suffer sin, the most deformed of objects, to rival him in their hearts. Such returns to the best of beings and the best of friends, surely deserve nothing less than eternal burnings. It is reserved for the last judgment to lay open the infinity of that sin which the children of God daily commit against their heavenly Parent. "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for" this cruel ingratitude to the best and kindest of fathers.

III. What new and wonderful views does our subject give us of the love of God. After all our ingratitude, (which seems enough to make the stones cry out against us,) he still loves us with infinite tenderness, and would find it unspeakably harder to neglect us than a mother to neglect her mourning infant. O the unutterable, the boundless love

of God! Eternal research will not exhaust this subject. It was to bring out this love to the view of an astonished universe, that all these worlds were made. Nothing was so important as the display of this unbounded love in its own proper exercise. From this infinite ocean of love, of light, and of glory, have flowed down unceasing rivers of delight into all parts of the universe, save one, for six thousand years, without exhausting or diminishing the fountain. Why is not the wonder of this love more realized? It is infinitely the greatest wonder in the universe. Why is not this precious Being more apprehended when he shines in such amazing glories all around us? when his love appears so ineffable in his care of his creatures and in his kindness towards them? Henceforth let it be our supreme object to search into his adorable perfections and to make them known to creatures.—And after all our sottish stupidity and ingratitude, let our lives hereafter be spent in advancing his kingdom and glory,—in gratitude, adoration, and praise. Amen.

SERMON XVI.

SON AND HEIR THROUGH CHRIST.

GAL. IV. 7.

Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Guilt and unbelief are prone to represent God as an implacable foe, and often check, even in Christians, that humble boldness and firm reliance with which a redeemed soul ought to cast itself upon a covenant God. The spirit most becoming a child of God is not servile fear, but filial confidence. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba Father." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son." As the whole moral glory of God consists in love, and as the most precious exercises of love are mercy and truth, God is most glorified when these perfections are most

distinctly seen and most confidently relied on. He never is better pleased than when his children feel a strong confidence in his veracity and paternal tenderness. Such a trust is the choicest and most difficult effort of faith, and does more than all direct exertions upon ourselves, and infinitely more than all the glooms of guilt, to purify the heart, to overcome the world, and to procure from God all the strength we need. In this grace all other graces and holy habits are involved; as love, humility, repentance, and universal obedience. It is this operation of love which brings us into the closest union and communion with God, and leaves the deepest impression of his image on the heart. It is the very hand which takes of the things of God and transfers them to the soul. It is the very bond of union to Christ, and therefore the grand condition on which all blessings are bestowed. This then is the grace which it behooves us to cultivate with the most assiduous care. And that I may encourage you, my beloved brethren, to rise up to this filial confidence, I shall direct your attention to the high standing which believers hold as sons and heirs of God.

But first it is necessary to consider the ground on which this amazing privilege rests. It rests on the mediation of Christ. "If a son, then an heir of God through Christ." The principle of receiving privileges on account of another who stands in a certain relation to us, is familiar to you all. You constantly see children treated with kindness by their father's friend, without any reference to their

own merit. On this principle proceeds the whole system of divine grace. The unworthy receive blessings on account of another who has espoused their cause and assumed their responsibility. A deep impression of this truth must be fastened on your minds before you can rise up to a realizing sense of that stupendous system to which I am solicitous to draw your attention. And yet this impression cannot be made but by the simple exercise of faith, resting implicitly on the testimony of God. God has said that for the love he bears his Son, he will treat those outcasts whom his Son has adopted, with all the tenderness of a Father; and we must firmly rely on this declaration. In no other way can the impression be obtained.

Thus prepared, let us go back to the beginning, and contemplate this great subject step by step. In the ages of eternity a covenant was entered into between the persons of the sacred Trinity respecting the redemption of the world. The Son voluntarily assumed the office of Mediator and espoused the cause of a ruined race. He engaged to take our nature, to take our place under law, and to perform and suffer all that was necessary to support the authority of the law. He engaged to yield perfect obedience to its requirements, and in the nature which had sinned, to receive and obey a command from the Father to die on a cross as a substitute for man. The Father, who in this transaction held the rights of the Godhead, accepted the offer and engaged to receive that vicarious sacrifice in the room of the punishment of believing sinners. He en-

gaged also to confer on the Son, thus voluntarily reduced to a servant, a glorious reward. In the first place, seeing that the Son would lose his pains unless an obstinate race should be subdued and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, he engaged (the Spirit consenting,) that a certain number should be thus subdued and sanctified. This number he gave to the Son by absolute promise, and wrote their names, (speaking after the manner of men,) "in the book of life." In the next place, he constituted his Son the "heir of all things" and gave him the universe for himself and his Church. He made this grant to him, not as a private person, (if I may so say,) but as "the head of the body." He gave him nothing which was not to be shared by his Church, and all its members were constituted "joint heirs" with him. Hence the assurance to believers, "All things are yours." Hence also the promises: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." "All things work together for good to them that love God." In the next place, he appointed his Son the manager and distributer of the whole estate, and made him "head over all things to the Church." that he might overrule all things for the happiness of his people. The Spirit consented to act under him: and thus "all power—in heaven and in earth" was "given" to the mediatorial King as head and guardian of the Church.

All this he was to purchase for himself and his people by his obedience "unto death." But as he

had given bonds for the payment of the price, he was actually invested with the inheritance from the beginning, and entered upon the office of mediatorial King immediately after the fall, and has been the sole governor of the universe ever since. On the strength of that bond he also entered on the distribution of the blessings he was to purchase.—From Abel down to John the Baptist, sinners were saved on the ground of his obedience and death. But passing by those preceding ages, it will help our conceptions to come down to the time when the bond was cancelled and the reward more openly conferred; that is, to the actual sufferings of Christ and the glory which followed.

As soon as sufficient preparations had been made by *instruction*, to enable men to understand the wondrous plan, and by *predictions and the prophetic testimony of types*, to furnish abundant evidence of his divine mission; and as soon as the state of science had become sufficiently mature, and the intercourse among the nations sufficiently extended, to spread and transmit the records and proofs of the great transactions; the Son of God appeared in the flesh. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." He was "made of a woman, made under the law," in "the form," not of God, but a "servant" of God. He perfectly obeyed the divine law under circumstances the most trying. In the nature which had sinned he drank "the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out." He stood before heaven and earth and there offered for a rebellious world life

for life. Here ended all that the Son had engaged to do and suffer. Now it remained for the Father to fulfil *his* part of the covenant. In the first place then, he declared himself appeased by raising the Sufferer from the dead. This was a public acceptance of the person and atonement of the Son. It was an acceptance of the sacrifice in behalf of believing sinners, and so was a sign and seal of their acquittal. Hence it is said that he "was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." The atonement left believers where Adam stood the first moment of his existence, before he had either transgressed or obeyed. Let us now extend our view to those rewards which were conferred on the Son when he arose, and conferred, not for his sufferings as such, but for his obedience. As the most essential part of his obedience consisted in yielding himself to death, so his reward was inseparably connected with his resurrection; insomuch that his resurrection was publicly viewed as a manifestation of his title to the inheritance, and thus a manifestation of his sonship. He was "declared to be the Son of God with power—by the resurrection from the dead." As he arose to take possession of the inheritance, he is called "the *first-born* from the dead," and "the *first begotten* of the dead." Indeed his resurrection is expressly mentioned as a fulfilment of what is written in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."* In a word when he arose from the

* Acts, xiii. 33.

dead and appeared in heaven with all his engagements fulfilled, he, in the most visible manner, took out of the hands of pure Godhead all the blessings which he had purchased for the Church; including regeneration, pardon, sanctification, guidance, comfort, and eternal life, together with the subserviency of the whole universe to these ends. In a more formal and visible manner than he had ever done before, he took possession of the inheritance; including the use and enjoyment of the whole universe, not for himself alone, but as "the first born among many brethren." He took possession in behalf of all the "joint heirs." All the blessings which redeemed sinners can ever receive for time or eternity, were put out of the hands of pure Godhead and committed to the Mediator for distribution. Thus when "he ascended on high" he "received gifts for men."

At the same time he was, in a more full and visible manner, appointed the guardian of his younger brethren, with power to impart the blessings he had purchased according to his own will,—a will however in perfect accordance with that of the Father and submissive to it. "As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.—For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." His dominion which extends to all worlds, is nothing distinct from the office of guardian and distributer to his brethren. All power is committed to him that he may use it for their benefit. This dominion was conferred on him as the

reward of his obedience. "He—became obedient unto death;—wherefore God—hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." One of the prerogatives of his sovereignty is a right to judge the world; and as the whole of his dominion and glory was promised as the reward of his obedience "unto death," his resurrection was a public manifestation in particular of his investment with this high judicial authority. God "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, *whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead.*"

Every part of his reward was bestowed more visibly and fully after his resurrection, than it had been by anticipation before. The delegated dominion which was a part of the reward, involved the direction of the divine Spirit whose mission he had procured for men. He told his disciples that if he went "not away the Comforter" would "not come unto" them, but that if he went away he would "send him;" in other words, that he would ask the Father and *he* would send them the Comforter; that is, the Priest by his intercession would obtain that gift, and then the King, acting with delegated authority, would send it. This was the principal gift which he received for men; and he received it when he ascended on high, "that the Lord God might dwell among them." The new and enlarged communication of this gift was made on the day of Pentecost, and has continued with

the Church ever since. This was the chief means by which his kingdom was to be enlarged on earth and in heaven, and by which he was to "see of the travail of his soul and—be satisfied," By this means he at once obtained a glorious kingdom among the Gentiles, overturned the altars of devils, demolished their temples, and drove his enemy from his usurped dominion in the Roman empire. Every convert was a new trophy; every new church swelled the triumphs of his grace. The countless millions given to him in the everlasting covenant, (including, it is believed, by far the greater part of Adam's race,) will all be brought in by the energies of his Spirit. Nor will he stop till he has beaten his enemy from the field and shut him up in prison, and after reigning on earth without a rival for a thousand years, has transplanted a glorious Church to the eternal heavens.

All this dominion and glory and blessedness constituted the inheritance which he took possession of as "the first born among many brethren," for the benefit of the "joint heirs." The complete use of the whole universe was comprised in this inheritance; and the whole universe, so far as it constitutes a good to be enjoyed by the Church, or in any way subserves that good, was taken out of the hands of pure Godhead and committed to the mediatoral King as his own, for the use of himself and his people; not however in a way to hide from creatures the supreme right of the Father and his gracious grant, (for that would have defeated the whole design, by concealing, not only the just claims of

God, but the procuring influence of the Mediator;) but the Father's right and his gracious grant are both acknowledged in the intercession of the Priest. But still the mediatorial King has as complete possession and as perfect a control over the whole inheritance, as though the Father had ceased to exist. And the whole is owned and managed by him, not as God but as Mediator, the Head of the Church, "the first born among many brethren." The whole then is as really owned by every believer,—as unalienably owned by every believer,—as by Christ himself. He is not the Mediator any further than he is the Head, the Guardian, the Representative of the Church. Whatever therefore he receives as Mediator, he receives for the use of the Church,—for the use of every living member in it. Whatever is unchangeably made over to the Head, is unchangeably made over to every member. In point of treatment he and his Church are absolutely one. No oneness so absolute and infrangible subsists between our natural members, between husband and wife, between soul and body, between any two objects in the whole creation. Nothing so nearly resembles it as the everlasting oneness between the divine Father and Son: "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:—I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." If Christ is a Son, they are sons of God; if Christ is "heir of all things," they are "joint heirs with" him; if Christ possesses everlasting life, because he lives they "shall live also;" if Christ is a King, they shall sit

down with him upon his throne. Where he is there they shall be also. If he is rich they cannot be poor. If the whole universe is made over to him, they possess it all. They own the sun, moon, and stars. They are put in possession of the infinite God.—"*All* things are" theirs. "Whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are" theirs, and they "are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

Still "the heir, as long as he is a child," is not put into actual possession of the inheritance, but is treated in many respects as "a servant, though he be lord of all." He is kept "under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father." In this life we are minors; but he who purchased the inheritance is appointed our Guardian to manage the interest for us, to hold it securely against we come of age, to direct our education, and to superintend our whole course. He will allow us to want nothing. Our inheritance is ample, and he will impart it to us as fast as we need. It comprehends all needed good, temporal and spiritual; and all needed good our Guardian will bestow. He may chasten us sore when we offend, but he will not deliver us over to death. The very correction is intended for our benefit. He may leave us, to try us and to prove us and to know what is in our hearts, but it is only that he may humble us and do us good in the latter end. He may leave us destitute of some of the good things of this life, but it is not because he grudges us these husks which he lavishes on his enemies. It is because these husks

are not the children's bread, and would really be hurtful to us. Did we actually need them, he would create a new world for our use rather than withhold them from us. He sees what strength and light and grace we need to help us on our way, and will impart them all. His "strength" shall be "made perfect in" our "weakness." His grace shall be "sufficient for" us. He will "guide" us by his "counsel" until he receives us "to glory." "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." He "will bind up that which" is "broken, and strengthen that which" is "sick." He will "gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom." When we say our "foot slippeth," his "mercy" will hold us up. The inheritance is not to be purchased by our fidelity nor forfeited by our infirmities. It is made sure and unalienable by the price paid by our Head; and he has stipulated with the Father, absolutely, to bear us through and bring us into the full possession.—Every interest is made sure in Christ.

And now what has the believer to do but to adore and love and serve his infinite Guardian and Friend, to cleave to him, and to "rejoice evermore?" Let him roll every care and burden on the Lord, and advance towards the heavenly mark "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." O ye most highly favored of all the creatures of God, place more confidence in your Guardian and Guide. Banish these tremblings and fears. Rejoice that the Redeemer of Zion reigns; that he has found his

throne after passing once, as you are now passing, through a vale of tears. Be ye "partakers of" his "sufferings, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." Take up the cross that you may wear the crown. Place more confidence in him as your all prevalent Intercessor. "Seeing—that we have" such a "High priest that is passed into the heavens," fail not to go boldly to the throne of grace. Lie no longer as slaves beneath the throne. In all the sublimity and tenderness of the filial spirit, go through him to the infinite God, crying, "Abba Father." Cultivate more this spirit of adoption,—this holy, humble confidence. And O remember him. Forget your father and mother, but O remember him. Say from your inmost soul, "If I forget thee," O my Saviour, "let my right hand forget her cunning." When you kneel at the throne of grace, remember him: when you are abroad in the world, fail not to remember him: when you approach the sacramental board, O remember him with bursting love and praise: when you lie on your dying pillow, still remember him: stretch out your hands to him and die with your eye fixed upon his cross. Amen.

SERMON XVII.

LOVE TO OUR NEIGHBOR.

MAT. XXII. 35–40.

Then one of them which was a lawyer asked him a question, tempting him and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

In love to God and man consists all the religion of the Old Testament and the New. As far as any religion has this character it is genuine, whatever errors and imperfections may attend it As far as any religion wants this character it is spurious, however correct may be the creed and conduct of its professors. "Though I—understand—all knowledge and—have all faith;—though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and—give my body to be burned, and have not charity, [that *love* to God and man which "is the fulfilling of the law,"] it profiteth me nothing." Zeal itself is nothing better than

strange fire any further than it is enkindled by love. Is it tinctured with bitterness towards men of opposite opinions? Is it proud? Does it irritate rather than allay the sinful passions? It is nothing but animal nature excited. Animal nature, warmed by sympathy, heated by party spirit, and blown by the breath of spiritual pride, may be kindled into fervent zeal when there is little or no love to God or man. These impure ingredients are too often mixed with the zeal of those who are really pious,—those especially who have warm and sanguine constitutions. It may be admitted as an everlasting maxim, that the less our religion is shaped by our natural temperament, the more supernatural and pure it is.

Scarcely any human propensity discovers itself more in matters of religion, than a disposition to sunder the two tables of the law which God has joined together. A great portion of the Christian world, though split into different parties and called by various names, may be reduced to two classes; those who place their religion too exclusively in love to man, and those who place it too exclusively in love to God. The former class, neglectful of the duties of private devotion, and inattentive to their affections to their Creator and Redeemer, place all their religion in moral honesty, alms-giving, and decent manners, added perhaps to a formal acknowledgment of God in the acts of public worship. The latter class, though full of devotion and zeal towards God, are neglectful of their duties to their neighbors. If they are not deficient in moral

honesty, at least their intercourse with men is strongly marked with selfishness. If they do not neglect the social and civil duties which are cardinal, they are too inattentive to the feelings of others, and too desirous to please themselves in the adjustment of numberless little circumstances which constitute a great part of the happiness or misery of social life. They habitually withhold many attentions which love could not fail to render. When the gratification of their own wills or propensities comes in competition with the wishes of others, as daily happens in many trivial matters, *their* pleasure must be consulted and their neighbor's disregarded. If they happen to differ from others on the topics of ordinary conversation, *they* are always in the right, and they maintain their opinions with an obstinacy and an ambition to triumph in the argument which is no wise consistent with loving their neighbors as themselves. They are sociable or silent as their own whims, and not as the feelings of others, dictate. If they are not bitter and censorious, they are at least untender and uncandid towards those who differ from them in opinion. They claim to love God, but they have little or no love to man.

Now these two kinds of religion equally separate the two tables of the law. Both are defective. Where love to both God and man is not found, there is no true love to either. On the one hand, that heart which "is enmity against God," has no sanctified affections of any kind. Its social affections are nothing more than the natural feelings which are common to infidels and pagans, and in some

measure to brutes. How can there be a principle of pure benevolence which refuses to love the Father of the universe, who comprehends in himself infinitely the greatest portion of all existence? Those who neglect the first table of the law and place all their religion in the duties of the second, never perform even these otherwise than in a superficial, heartless manner: and who does not know that external actions without the heart are dead,—the body without the soul? On the other hand, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." We cannot "bless—God" with the same tongue with which we "curse—men." That love to God which is not accompanied with love to our neighbor, is not genuine. True love to God contains a principle of good will to all intelligent beings, and of peculiar affection to those who bear his image. There is a selfish love to God as a benefactor and friend, which leaves the mind as sour towards men as ever. Love to men is one of the best tests of genuine love to God.

But even where love to God is sincere, there is danger that while engaged in contemplating our obligations to him, we shall overlook the attentions which we owe to men. We must reflect much on the second great command, in order to prevent our religion from becoming unsocial and severe. Real love is not an unsocial principle. The sweet flow

of affection towards all men which appears in revivals of religion, especially among those in whom the love of God is new and ardent, evinces this.

My present design is to treat of love to our neighbor; in doing which I shall describe perfection which I never reached; but the law of God is not the less binding for our defects.

We are required to love our neighbor as ourselves. Who then is our neighbor? Every child of Adam, —those who are to us what the Samaritans were to the Jews,—those who have a different religion, who are strangers and natural enemies. These are our neighbors according to Christ's own instruction in the parable of the good Samaritan. Wherever there is man, there is our neighbor.

Love to our neighbor is a principle of universal good will and kindness; a disposition to desire, and as far as we are able to promote, the temporal and spiritual prosperity of all men; to "do good" to "all" as we have—opportunity," "especially" to "the house-hold of faith." "Charity—is kind."

Charity is a principle far more pure and elevated than any of the natural affections, and is essentially different from the friendships of the world,—from all friendships founded on a similarity of natural tastes, community of interests, or interchange of favors. Its objects are both persons and characters; and to both it is just and impartial. It loves persons according to their greatness and the distinctness with which they are contemplated. It loves the divine image by whomsoever reflected, in proportion to the clearness with which it is seen. Where charity is combined

with natural affection or natural friendship, there is a greater amount of affection, but the excess is natural affection only, and not sanctified love.

But what is it to love our neighbor *as ourselves?* It implies two things; that our love to ourselves is properly regulated, and that our love to our neighbor is regulated by that. We are not required to love our neighbor as we *in fact* love ourselves, but as we *ought* to love ourselves. If our love both to ourselves and others was properly regulated, we should love our neighbor as ourselves; that is, *we should feel and act towards others as we should wish them to feel and act towards us.* This explanation I borrow from Christ himself. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; *for this* [take notice,] *is the law and the prophets;*" that is, this is all that the law and the prophets require in relation to our neighbor; in other words, this is all that is required in the latter of those two commandments on which "hang all the law and the prophets." But the question still returns. How should we in that case desire others to feel and act towards us? I answer, as affectionately and kindly as perfect love can feel and act towards another. We could not desire more. Still the question returns, Could a man, in the exercise of perfect love, be as interested in the happiness of another as in his own? In many cases, we know, men are bound, and are ready, to deny themselves for the benefit of others, and to forget themselves in their solicitude for their neighbor's good. Christians may be called "to lay

down" their "lives for the brethren." So far is clear. On the other hand, our own interest is specially committed to our care, and is more immediately under our eye. I may add, we are more conscious of our own sensations than of the sensations of others, and can be more sensible of the value of happiness when it is connected with our own consciousness, than when it belongs to another. There is also an innocent self-love on our own side, to balance the benevolence which we feel for others but cannot feel for ourselves. But we are so little acquainted with the feelings of perfect beings that we ought not to be too positive on this subject.—One thing however is certain: we cannot in practice, whatever we may do in theory, carry the genuine love of our neighbor to excess. We may indeed do so much for one as to defraud another, and so much for a part as to contract our usefulness to the whole: but we cannot do too much for our fellow men in general. If by our exertions we destroy our health, this is limiting the good which we might have done to others as a whole.

Another thing is certain: we must extend to our neighbor an affection which has the same general qualities with that which we bear to ourselves; tender, constant, persevering. Whenever we think of him, though we have nothing to say or do, our hearts must go forth in real love and sincere wishes for his happiness. Be he a stranger, be he a supporter of opinions opposite to our own, be he an enemy, or in one word, be he a Samaritan, he is still our neighbor. We must regard his errors and

sins, even when they are pointed against ourselves, without any of the censoriousness or bitterness either of party spirit or personal resentment, but with real compassion. Whatever of Christ he has, we must love and honor, however he may oppose and vilify us. Whatever of sin he has, we must be ready to forgive. "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." Whatever provocations we meet with, we must never suffer a feeling to rise towards any person but what is consistent with the kindest wishes for his happiness. If we feel indignation, it must be because he has sinned against God. But we may not wish him evil nor rejoice at his calamities. We may indulge no personal ill will, no malice, no revenge, no anger, peevishness, or impatience. A Christian "must—not" "be" "soon angry." "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." "Charity suffereth long,—is not easily provoked,—beareth all things,—endureth all things." "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is—peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated," "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men,—patient," "showing all meekness unto all men." "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee

on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.—And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." "Only by pride cometh contention." Pride must not be allowed to set up claims in opposition to the rights of others. There must be no rivalship, no contention for influence, no "vain glory," no aspiring desires to outdo or outshine another for the sake of being his superior,—no vanity, no boasting, no envy. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." "Charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another;" taking "the lowest room." There must be no impatience of contradiction, no obstinacy in maintaining opinions. The man of God must not be self-willed."

"Charity—thinketh no evil." It indulges no evil surmisings against a neighbor. It gives the most favorable construction to all his doubtful actions. It imputes no bad design where it is possible to suppose another. It never construes the actions or designs of others in a way which bespeaks anything but perfect benevolence. "Judge not that ye be not judged." "Charity—hopeth all things." It hopes the best of every man and of all his professions. Yet charity is not blind, nor does it believe against evidence. It does not think all men Christians. It does not credit a profession of

religion which is contradicted either by the life or the creed. I know it has become fashionable to use the word charity as synonymous with a good opinion of others. But this is a dangerous abuse of the term. Charity has no such meaning in the Bible. There it is only another name for love.

So far as we are under the influence of love, we shall not be more keen sighted to discern the failings of others than to discover our own. We shall not behold "the mote" in our "brother's eye" and be insensible of "the beam" that is in our own.

Charity is tender of a neighbor's good name. It will "speak evil of no man." It banishes all talebearing, backbiting, and slander. It never speaks of another but in a manner consistent with the purest benevolence. "In" its "tongue is the law of kindness." It indulges no complaints against others which betray more feelings for self than justice and truth.

We must never speak *to* another but in a manner consistent with the purest love. We must not render "railing for railing." We must never blame another in a manner expressive of the slightest evil passion or the least desire to inflict needless pain. No impatient expression should escape us. "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the counsel; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." We may never utter an expression, whether dictated by anger or pride, which is calculated unnecessarily to wound the feelings of another. We may never di-

rect a point of wit against another which we should not be willing to receive ourselves.

Our *actions* should never betray any thing contrary to good will. Neither by conduct nor manners nor looks nor the modulation of the voice, should we unnecessarily wound the feelings of another. The love required is a spirit of disinterestedness, ready to consult the feelings of others rather than our own, in words, looks, deportment, and in a thousand nameless attentions which love never fails to prompt,—not indeed to increase our own popularity, but to communicate happiness.—As little as we know of the feelings of perfect benevolence, we may see how love expresses itself in all these ways towards our friends or our children, even when we disapprove of their conduct; and in this way we may form some idea how perfect love would act towards all men. We ought to exercise a tender regard to the feelings of others. "Christ pleased not himself." "Charity—seeketh not her own." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." We should consult the feelings of others rather than our own in regard to topics of conversation, and in efforts to keep up conversation. There should be nothing neglectful either in our feelings or conduct, nothing disobliging, nothing churlish, nothing unsociable, nothing like abandoning society. Without civil looks, words, and manners, we do not exert ourselves, "as much as lieth in" us, to "live peaceably with all men." In cases where conscience will allow, we should give others their

choice instead of insisting on having our own. In all little things where there is a preference, it is going on the safe side to give it to others. In all these respects true religion coincides with true politeness.

"The wisdom that is from above is—without partiality." We must not be partial in our attentions to particular friends whose taste accords with our own, to the neglect of others who have equal claims upon us. This would be to grieve others for the sake of pleasing ourselves. In these things we must avoid the undue influence of private feelings and bring them into subjection to duty. The less we are influenced by natural feelings and the more we are governed by a sense of duty, the safer will our conduct be. Though we must honor those "to whom honor" "is due," such as civil and ecclesiastical officers, and must render different degrees of respect to men according to their different ages, stations, and qualifications; yet in religious matters, especially in ecclesiastical trials, we must make no distinction founded on circumstances foreign to religion. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ—with respect of persons. For if there come into your assembly a man with a gold ring in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment, and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or, Sit here under my footstool; are ye not then partial in yourselves? ——If ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scrip-

ture, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*, ye do well: but if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin."

"The wisdom that is from above is—without hypocrisy." In accordance with the spirit of the ninth commandment, there must be nothing false, nothing insincere, in our intercourse with men. The best way to avoid insincerity in those numerous compliments and professions which custom has sanctioned, is actually to feel all the good will and love which they express.

"The wisdom that is from above is—peaceable." It will strive to heal without delay all breaches between ourselves and others. "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave then thy gift before the altar and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Love will leave no means untried to make peace among neighbors. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

The love required will render us strictly just in all our dealings. Not only will it prevent us, according to the spirit of the eighth commandment, from screwing from our neighbor what justly belongs to him; but, according to the tenor of the tenth commandment, it will restrain us from coveting what is his. We must have two selves for parties in every contract, and mete such measure as we are willing to receive. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." "Look not

every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

The love required will certainly prevent us from leading others into sin, or even desiring to bring guilt on them for the sake of gratifying ourselves.

"The wisdom that is from above is—full of mercy and good fruits." It is generous and bountiful. It is "given to hospitality." It is compassionate to the distressed and charitable to the poor. It is liberal in support of public institutions. It is beneficent to the full extent of its ability. Among the various commands which it contemplates, it is sure not to overlook such as these: Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." "Sell that ye have and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbors; lest they bid thee again and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blest; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." All these beneficent actions must be done from pure love, and not to be seen of men.

The love required will, according to the spirit of the fifth commandment, "be subject to principali-

ties and powers" and "obey magistrates." It will "render—honor to whom honor" is due, "fear to whom fear," "tribute to whom tribute." It will be respectful to superiors, condescending to inferiors, kind to equals, affable and obliging to all. It will faithfully and affectionately perform what is due to parents and children, husbands and wives, brethren and sisters. It will regulate all our natural affections.

Love to our neighbor will awaken a desire for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom and the salvation of men. We should long and labor for this object, as well from tender love to the souls of men,—of men whom we never saw,—as from a regard to the glory of God. To one who feels a fervent love to God and man, there appears no opposition between these two motives. Indeed as they stand before the eye they coalesce and become one.

Love excludes party spirit from religion. Though it distinguishes between truth and error, between the clean and the unclean, its aim is not to build up a party, but to promote the knowledge and enjoyment of God among all men. There may be as much private interest in religious parties as in polical sects, and as much selfishness and rancor in each as in the miser or the assassin. Instead of calling down fire on the Samaritans, we must regard them as our neighbors, and love them as we love ourselves.

Finally, love will excite us to pray for the temporal and spiritual prosperity of all men. "I ex-

hort—that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority." If we would find deliverance from our own troubles, we must pray for others. "The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends." We must pray for others if we would love them more fervently, and thus improve the temper of our own hearts. On this subject I shall quote the language of an eminent divine of the Church of England.*

"There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him; and when you can once do this sincerely for any man, you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generosity and tenderness that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour than anything that is called fine breeding and good manners.

"By considering yourself as an advocate with God for your neighbors and acquaintance, you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy for you to bear with and forgive those for whom you particularly implored the divine mercy and forgiveness.

"Such prayers as these amongst neighbors and acquaintance, would unite them to one another in the strongest bonds of love and tenderness. It would exalt and ennoble their souls, and teach them to consider one another in a higher state, as members of a spiritual society that are created for the

* Law's Serious Call. P. 296, 297.

enjoyment of the common blessings of God, and fellow heirs of the same future glory.

"And by being thus desirous that every one should have their full share of the favors of God, they would not only be content but glad to see one another happy in the little enjoyments of this transitory life.— —— —— "Ouranius is a holy priest, full of the spirit of the Gospel; watching, laboring, and praying for a poor country village. Every soul in it is as dear to him as himself,—because he prays for them all as often as he prays for himself.

"If his whole life is one continued exercise of great zeal and labor, hardly ever satisfied with any degrees of care and watchfulness, 'tis because he has learned the great value of souls by so often appearing before God as an intercessor for them.

* * * * * * * * * *

"He goes about his parish and visits every body in it, but visits in the same spirit of piety that he preaches to them. He visits them to encourage their virtues,—to discover their manner of life, and to know the state of their souls, that he may intercede with God for them according to their particular necessities.

"When Ouranius first entered into holy orders, he had a haughtiness in his temper, a great contempt and disregard for all foolish and unreasonable people. But he has prayed away this spirit, and has now the greatest tenderness for the most obstinate sinners; because he is always hoping that God will, sooner or later, hear those prayers that he makes for their repentance.

"The rudeness, ill nature, or perverse behavior of any of his flock, used at first to betray him into impatience; but it now raises no other passion in him than a desire of being upon his knees in prayer to God for them.

"Thus have his prayers for others altered and amended the state of his own heart.

"It would strangely delight you to see with what spirit he converses, with what tenderness he reproves, with what affection he exhorts, and with what vigor he preaches: and 'tis all owing to this; because he reproves, exhorts, and preaches to those for whom he first prays to God."

Thus, my hearers, I have described as well as I was able, the love to our neighbor which the divine law requires. This is that charity to men about which we hear so much, but which appears to be little understood and still less practised.

Methinks I hear some exclaim, What tame and spiritless characters would such a religion form: there would be no men of letters, no poets, no orators, no statesmen.—But tell me, was Jesus of Nazareth so tame? Was not he who spoke as never man spoke, eloquent? Was not Isaiah a poet? Were not Moses and Solomon statesmen? Have you ever considered the fervor, activity, and eloquence of the apostle Paul? Do you know any who in these respects surpass the holy angels? Indeed what other temper has God himself? Had we perfect love, we should do what is good and excellent "with all" our "might," because it is commanded: and that which is not good and excellent

we ought to leave undone. If so much care for our feelings, words, and actions would check the boldness and ardor of eloquence, or in any degree moderate our decision of character, it would prove that these have been supported by wrong principles. Let them then be checked, till divine love, coming in the place of wrong affections, makes us active, eloquent, and decided, as "the rapt seraph that adores and burns."

I am awed into reverence as I approach the religion of Christ. What a pure and exalted system of morals it presents. The Bible is the only book on earth that draws a perfect character. This sublime morality of loving God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves,—how infinitely superior to the sordid selfishness of heathen systems. What are your Senecas and your Platos but glow worms by the side of the meridian sun? This is the religion which makes men truly good and great. This is the religion which would make a happy world. The harmony and blessedness of heaven are nothing more. Let men universally love the Lord their God with all their hearts and their neighbor as themselves, and you may remove your prisons and your stocks; you have done with courts of justice: all animosities are extracted from the human heart, and nothing but peace and love and universal happiness remains.

We now see why so many professors walk in darkness and are oppressed with doubts. It is because their religion is so little in accordance with the word of God. They cannot but see this con-

trariety whenever they open their Bibles. Many things which are there required they do not find in themselves; many things which are there forbidden they do find to their sorrow. They have "a form of godliness," and perhaps a zeal; but if they possess any of the religion of love, it is but a spark buried under the ashes of their idol altars. The way to obtain "the full assurance of hope," is to have more love to God and man; to bring all our habits of feeling, conversing, and living, under the control of this principle; to go through all our habits with a scrutinizing eye, to correct whatever is wrong, and to confirm whatever is right; making it a matter of conscience daily and hourly to act, in small matters as well as great, from a sacred regard to the will of God.

In the light of our subject we discover the strictness of the service which God requires. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life." The charity which I have described is very far from that latitudinarian principle which makes the way broad enough for a whole world to go abreast. It is a principle of strict and scrupulous holiness. "Sir," said a worldly man to Mr. Rogers, (the first martyr in queen Mary's reign,) "I like your company, but you are so strict." "Ah, Sir," said Mr. Rogers, "I serve a strict God."

We see from our subject that the law of God "is exceeding broad," even if we look only at that part which respects our neighbor. As a whole it extends to every moral action, word, thought, and feeling. How impossible to present a righteous-

ness of our own which this law will accept. Mere law can accept none but a perfect righteousness. "By the deeds of the law" therefore "there shall no flesh be justified." From this tribunal we must appeal to the throne of grace, and rest for justification on the perfect righteousness of the Redeemer. As we contemplate the requirements of the law, we see at once our absolute need of the righteousness of Christ. But unless we are his disciples by faith, his righteousness can avail us nothing. And we are not his disciples unless we pant after holiness, and watch and pray and diligently use the means appointed. We must reach forth after a greater and still greater conformity to the divine law.— "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

WHERE IS THE LORD GOD OF ELIJAH?

II. KIN. II. 14.

Where is the Lord God of Elijah?

This was the exclamation of Elisha at a time when his master had just been taken up from him in a fiery chariot, and he stood in need of the assistance of that God who had so remarkably displayed his power in the days of Elijah. In that period of declension from the worship of Jehovah, a long suffering God raised up a succession of prophets to bear testimony for him and to work miracles in his name. One of the most distinguished of these prophets was Elijah. The time in which he executed the prophetic office was a remarkable period in the history of that people. Except Moses and Samuel, there had been no prophet whose ministry had been attended with such pre-eminent tokens of divine power. At his request the heavens

were shut that "it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months;" when he was hungry the ravens were commanded to feed him; at his word the widow's meal and oil failed not during the famine; he restored the same widow's son to life; he gloriously triumphed over the prophets of Baal by calling fire from heaven on Carmel; "he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit;" he called fire from heaven to consume the two captains with their hostile bands. At last when the time drew near for him to be received up into heaven, he came to Jordan with Elisha, and "took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters, and they were divided, ——so that they two went over on dry ground.—And it came to pass as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces." At this time of distress, when that glorious season of divine wonders was past, (the season of Elijah's ministry,) when Elisha looked back on those delightful days as forever gone,—when his trembling soul panted for the return of those displays of divine power and glory,—when he ventured, in the strength of the Lord, to attempt the same things that Elijah had done; it was then that he looked upward and inquired, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" This inquiry

he made when he smote the waters of Jordan with Elijah's mantle and opened a passage for himself on dry ground. This inquiry we may suppose he made when he healed the waters of Jericho,—when by his frown he called two she bears from the wood to destroy the children of idolatrous parents who had been taught to mock him,—when he multiplied the widow's oil,—when he raised the Shunammite's son,—when he purified the poisoned pottage, when he fed the multitude with a few loaves,—when he healed Naaman,—when he smote Gehazi with leprosy,—when he made the iron swim,—when he opened his servant's eyes to behold the mountain full of chariots and horses of fire,—when he smote the messengers of Syria with blindness and again restored their sight. The spirit of Elijah did rest upon Elisha in an increased degree. When the former was about to ascend into heaven, he "said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee.—And Elisha said, I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee."—Elisha saw him when he ascended: he caught his falling mantle, and with it a double portion of his spirit, and in the course of his life performed more miracles than his master had done.

The particular point in which I wish to view the prophet as inquiring for the Lord God of Elijah, is in the act of raising the Shunammite's son. It was her only child,—the son of her old age,—which God had given her for her hospitality to the pro-

phet. When he was grown and was with his father in the field, "he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. And when he had—brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon and then died. And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him and went out." And she hastened away to Carmel to the man of God, and brought him to her house. And "he went in" where the child lay, "and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord. And he went up and lay upon the child." Where now is the Lord God of Elijah who raised the widow's son of Sarepta? "And [he] put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm. And he returned and walked in the house to and fro." Methinks I hear him inwardly crying as he courses the room, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" "And [he] went up and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called" his servant "and said, Call the Shunammite. So he called her: and when she came in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son and went out." Ah how much might the faith of parents avail to raise their children to life who are dead in trespasses and sins.

This sermon I propose to consecrate to mourning. I heartily wish I had no occasion to address

you in any other language than that of congratulation and joy. I could wish that this address was prepared to bid you all a welcome to the privileges of believers, and that I might triumphantly speak to you and your households as together bound to the kingdom of heaven. I should then be saved from disturbing your peace with the sad tones of grief and depression. But I confess I have no spirits to entertain you with pleasant descriptions. There is a weight at my heart which suppresses every sprightly thought; and instead of giving you pleasure, I must call upon you to mourn. Is there not a cause? Our poor children are dead. Some of our dearest friends are dead. There are many around us, as dear to us as the child of the Shunammite was to his mother, who are dead in the most dreadful sense of the word, dead in trespasses and sins. Many parents among us have not a living child in the world. Some have not a living friend on earth. In some families you see death and life coupled together. Here is a living wife bound to a dead husband; there a living husband united to a dead wife; here a living child is supporting a dead parent; and there a whole family lie dead together. Death and life are in the same sense united in this assembly. On the same seat the dead and the living are crowded together. Should the hand of God deprive of motion every *body* in this house which contains a dead soul, what lamentation would be heard among us. How many would retire from the house fatherless? how many childless? how many widows? how many whole families would be swept off to-

gether? If our friends should be deprived of *natural* life we should mourn; and have we not a tear for those whose souls are dead and putrid in sin? Shall not a parent mourn who has six or eight dead children in his house?

How many of our poor unhappy youth are wholly destitute of spiritual life. Ye who have hearts formed for pity, come and look and weep. To see so many promising children,—so many youth lovely even in death,—scattered over the valley and numbered with the slain, is it not a pitiable sight? It is evident the poor creatures are dead, or they would not be so unmindful of the solemn objects which surround them and the infinitely interesting prospects before them. If they were not dead they would not be so regardless of death and the grave. If they were not dead they would not be so lost to a sense of God their Maker and Benefactor, nor to that holiness and communion with him which are spiritual and eternal life. If they were not dead they would not be so unmoved by a Saviour's love; they would not be so insensible of distress under the wounds which sin has given them. You would hear them sigh and complain; but dead bodies cannot feel. If they were not dead they would not be so unawed by the thunders which roll above their heads, so deaf to the entreaties of heaven, so unaffected by the anxious voice of their minister, so untouched by the tears of their parents. The dear unhappy children little know the sorrows and heart aches of living friends who behold them dead.—The dead are unmindful of the lamentations which

are made around their hearse, and of a parent's tear that often falls upon their grave. If Ezekiel could weep when he stood by the valley filled with the dry bones of his people, we have no less cause to mourn. What *can* be done for our poor dead children? Ministers have called to them with an aching heart till their voice and their spirits failed, and they could cry no longer. Their parents have wrung their hands over their lifeless offspring and cried in the ears of the dead, If you ever loved your parent, hear me, answer me once, my child: but there is "neither voice nor hearing." All that the most anxious love could accomplish, has been as unavailing as the staff of Gehazi. When one attempt has failed we have made another, and another still. We have, as it were, put our eyes to their eyes, and our hands to their hands, and endeavored to renew the breath of life in them; but their flesh does not wax warm nor a pulse move. Sometimes with bursting tears we ask, Are then our children *irrecoverably* dead? Will they never revive? What more can we do? Where can we go? To whom can we apply? Where, where is the Lord God of Elijah? He is our last resort. Our last trembling hope hangs on him. He only can raise the dead. *I am convinced of it.* I yield the point, and our dear friends *must* lie in eternal death if the Lord God of Elijah do not come to their relief. We may continue to stand over them with extended, pleading hands, and may drench their shroud with our tears, but the dead will not regard it. We may present before them every pos-

sible argument; heaven, earth, and hell may be drained of motives; but all will be to no purpose. Heaven, earth, and hell *have* been drained of motives; the experiment has been often tried: but you see how they lie. Behold, look for yourselves: not a muscle which death hath stiffened will move. It is distressing. We have done all we can do, but they are as dead as though nothing had been done. Could any other tones charm the ear of death, those tones should be eagerly sought. If the graver tones of divine authority, of divine threatening, could be heard, they have been often tried. If more sprightly, pleasant, and even sportive strains could allure, —as hard as it might be to be gay among the dead, we would attempt even that: we would conceal our sorrows, we would quell the rising tear, we would smile among the ruins of death, and though our heart should break we would not give it vent. But I know that whether men weep or smile, both will be in vain. The dead care not for laughter more than for grief. I am discouraged and sick of depending on human efforts. We have exhausted our power, but we cannot even produce one serious thought. Where then is the Lord God of Elijah? It does absolutely depend on him whether there shall ever be another sinner converted in this congregation. Should he put the question to us, "Son of man, can these bones live?" what could we answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest"? Thus wholly dependant on him, what can we do but take our friends in the arms of faith and carry them up and lay them before God, as the Shunam-

mite carried up her dead son and laid him on the bed of the man of God? If she hastened to Carmel and embraced the feet of the prophet, and said, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee," let us go and embrace the feet of Jesus, with the determination of Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." As we stand over the dry bones of the valley, unable to make a bone move, let us earnestly cry, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." He who raised the widow's son of Nain,—he who stood at the grave's mouth and said, "Lazarus, come forth,"—he who burst the bands of death and rose triumphant,—he can revive our children.

At the time when Elisha smote the waters of Jordan and cried, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" he looked back on a season which had been marked with divine wonders,—the season of Elijah's ministry. That ministry was closed. Elijah had taken his flight to heaven, and Elisha was left to brood over the recollection of scenes which could never return. Such a period lies before our eyes as they are turned to review the past. The middle half of last century was a distinguished period in the Christian Church. Many with whom we have taken counsel, could well remember that glorious day, when both continents experienced a remarkable visit from the Holy Spirit; when evangelical ministers, like angels flying through the midst of heaven, travelled from city to city, from state to state, and often rode the Atlantic wave, to

proclaim the glad tidings of salvation; when those servants of God bore valiant testimony against the worldling and the formalist arrayed in clerical habits, and prevailed to establish a new epoch in the progress of evangelical piety and preaching. That was a blessed day, never to be forgotten on earth, and which will be joyfully remembered to eternity by thousands who then first began to see the light and live. Christians then were alive; their spirits were tender; religious conversation chiefly occupied their social hours; their hearts were sweetly united in brotherly love; and with the utmost freedom they could communicate to each other their joys and trials. In those days Christians were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; they were not conformed to the world; they came boldly out and were a separate people. They were not then driving furiously after wealth and distinction: it was enough to fill their desires to see the kingdom of Christ advance. In those days parents with transport received their dead children to life, aud Christians wept for joy at hearing songs of thanksgiving poured from a thousand tongues just recovered from death. O give us more such days. Alas those days are fled. The world triumphs now and holds the Church in bondage. O for the return of those glorious scenes. Where is the Lord God of Whitefield, Tennent, Davis, Brainerd, and Edwards?—Where is the Lord God of our fathers?

In our times also it has pleased the divine Spirit to spread his extensive influences upon earth. The whole of this century, with eight or ten years

of the last, has been distinguished by very remarkable events in favor of Zion. During every part of this period we have seen or heard of unusual revivals of religion in different parts of the American Church. Many thousands have been raised from the dead and begun an endless life. A spirit of compassion for the heathen has been poured out, and exertions, greater than have appeared since the days of the apostles, have been made to cheer the abodes of pagan darkness with the light of life. But alas among *us* returning stupidity has damped the general joy; and the people of God, who have not themselves fallen asleep, have hung their harps upon the willows and weep as they remember Zion. Now and then a fuller tear breaks from their eye as they exclaim, Where is the Lord God of our former revivals?

Time has been, (I would not dismiss the pleasing remembrance though it is fraught with pain,) when the voice of Jesus of Nazareth was heard in these streets,—when his majesty sat enthroned in our assemblies,—when the interests of the soul were more regarded than paltry pelf,—when Christians *lived*,—when sinners trembled,—when the new born delighted to lisp the name of Jesus. As we cast our eyes over this assembly we can descry those who will not soon forget the scene. Yes, we have seen the day when some of you were trembling in near view of the eternal judgment,—when you verily thought there was but a step between you and death. We have seen the blessed hour when heavenly light broke in upon your despair,—when your

eyes opened upon eternal day,—when your transported souls dropped the calculation of endless sorrows and hugged the hope of immortal joy. I live, I live, you cried, as your grave clothes dropped at your feet. We have seen a parent's eye glisten with a trembling tear as his child looked up to thank his Deliverer. We have seen the solemn hour when, with palpitations before unknown, you stood in companies before the Lord to enter into covenant with him. We have seen the dear youth delighting to speak to each other of a Saviour's love, when tenderness melted in every eye, and their societies were full of the presence of Jesus and of love. Let me cleave to the fond remembrance. Tear me not from a scene to which my soul clings as to life itself. But ah it is gone, and what do these distressed eyes now behold? One general waste of stupidity and death. No child is revived; no parent's heart leaps for joy; none are conscious of their guilt and danger; none experience the joys of their espousals. Their divine Deliverer, whose love, in that hour, they thought they never could forget, is forgotten and neglected. The world has rivalled him. The world has carried away the Christian, the convert, and the sinner. *The world the world, the world:* this is the object which engrosses every care; this is the supreme deity that is adored. "Buy and sell and get gain: out with the thoughts of death: away with judgment and heaven: name not a Saviour's love: my farms and my merchandise I will have, though the earth trembles under my feet and heaven weeps blood upon

my head." And is it thus? Yes, and it is an evil beyond our power to cure. We have done and said all we can do, and it alters not the case.—Where then is the Lord God of Elijah? Where is the Lord God of our former sabbaths and sacraments? Where, O where is he? "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies?—Are they restrained?" I do know that it depends solely on the sovereign pleasure of God whether there shall ever be another revival of religion in this place, or whether they who are dead shall remain dead to eternity. One look from him and our sleeping friends shall revive; one frown from him and every unregenerate soul in this congregation shall die in his sins. Men and angels cannot change the decree. Ministers may preach, Christians may pray, parents may weep, and a thousand pious hearts may break; but if the Lord God of Elijah do not revive us the dead will not revive. This sentiment, though it has dwelt upon our tongues, I fear has never sunk deep enough into our hearts. In days of revival we have ascribed too much of the praise to men and means; and now perhaps we look too much to men and means for the relief desired. We never shall be revived until we realizingly feel our absolute and entire dependance on God,—until we can heartily and without reserve say, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God, for my expectation is from him." O for this dependance, that we may go forth in a body and lift

our eyes to heaven as the eyes of one man, and cry, as though the salvation of a world hung upon our prayer, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah? O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." Alas can he not be found? While thousands lie dead around us, can we not find the only being who can raise them to life? Where is he? Can we not find him? May we not find him? Where is the Lord God of Elijah?"

But such dependance and such a united cry will never be until caused by him. Ah then our last hope from ourselves has vanished. And now, reduced to the last extremity, we cry with greater distress, Where is the Lord God of all our revivals? O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat. *Can* he not be found? While thousands lie dead around us, can we not find the only being who can raise them to life? Where is he? Can we not find him? May we not find him? Why is his power restrained? Is his "hand—shortened that it cannot save," or "his ear heavy that it cannot hear?" No, but our "iniquities have separated between" him and us, and "hid his face from" us "that he will not hear." His power and grace are as abundant as when they were so abundantly displayed before our eyes: and if we would seek him he is to be found on *the same mercy seat* where we found him before. His mercy is not "clean gone forever." Methinks I see him stretching out his hands to this church and saying, Why weep ye? Have ye dead children in your houses? here is my power and grace at your ser-

vice. If ye are straitened, ye are not straitened in me but in yourselves. Yes, Lord, the reproof is just. Christians do not call upon the God of Elijah with that reverence, humility, and agonizing desire which are needful to obtain a glorious display of his grace. We might witness more blessed days than any before granted, if they were sufficiently sought. And will they never return? Yes, they shall return. It was said in the introduction that the days of Elisha were distinguished with more glory than those of Elijah. It was not in vain that he inquired for the Lord God of his master. Blessed thought! It shall not be in vain that here and there a solitary Christian is asking for the Lord God of Elijah.—The time will come when every sinner then living in this congregation shall open his eyes and behold the God whom perhaps his fathers rejected,—when these streets shall be full of prayer and of the conquests of Jesus,—when this house, if it be standing, shall be crowded with tender and devout hearers,—when the happy man whose voice shall be heard from this pulpit, will have less grief of heart than your minister now has. Ye sacred walls, if ye be then standing, tell not the tale to our posterity: disturb not that joyful assembly with the recital of what ye witness now. Say not to them, Your fathers who once assembled here, were besought with tears, but some of them mocked and others soon forgot. ——— Before that day arrives this voice shall be silent in death, and I hope this heart will cease to ache. Those seats shall be emptied of their present incumbents, and you will all be ga-

thered to the assembly of your fathers. But let that day come when it may,—whether I am in this world or that,—I think it will give me joy to see the kingdom of Christ prevail in the place where I once labored, and among the descendants of those I once loved. O the delightful, glorious prospect! I could dwell upon it with rapture till I died. Hasten that transporting day. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

SERMON XIX.

THE BETTER RESURRECTION.

HEB. XI. 35.

And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

The apostle in this chapter was contemplating the power of faith in the ancient saints. To comfort the Hebrew Christians under their various trials, he reminded them how cheerfully Abraham, at the divine command, left his father's house and all his kindred, and removed into a land of strangers, "not knowing whither he went;" and how, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, he was contented to find no abiding habitation, and to wander about from place to place, "dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob." The reason assigned for this conduct was, that he considered this world not as his home, but "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The apostle then proceeded to consider the resembling conduct of the innumerable saints who descended from

Abraham, and observed in general, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." He particularly noticed the conduct of Moses, who had "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." From Moses he descended down the ages, (taking notice, as he passed along, of the power of faith in the most distinguished saints,) until he arrived at the times of persecution. Here he commenced a most affecting account of the miseries endured by the people of God. "And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; were tempted; were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." Those who were stretched upon racks or fastened to stakes, might, by renouncing their religion, have risen up from the threatened death, (which would have been a sort of resurrection;) but they hoped to rise to an incomparably better life than they could enjoy on earth. They hoped to rise in one hour to the heavenly rest, and to carry up those tortured bodies in the final

resurrection. Both of these may probably be comprehended in that "better resurrection" which they contrasted with a guilty escape from the threatened death.

Those saints had a realizing sense that this earth was not their home. They sought not its pleasures as their portion; and they little regarded its trials, provided they could obtain a part in the "better resurrection." They discovered something in the regions beyond the grave which appeared unspeakably glorious, and which worldlings know nothing about. It becomes then an interesting inquiry, what there is beyond the bounds of this world which could so attract the eyes of martyrs from present objects, and cause them to exult amidst the agonies of a lingering death. If there is not something in heaven supremely desirable, these men were distracted, and even Christ died in vain. Let us,

I. Reflect on the lesson taught us by the conduct of the ancient saints, that this earth is not our home.

II. Inquire what there is in heaven which could encourage them to endure such extreme sufferings.

III. Contemplate the glories of the resurrection which they had in view.

I. Let us reflect on the lesson taught us by the conduct of the ancient saints, that this earth is not our home.

Had Abraham felt himself at home on earth, he would have sought some fixed abode and associated with the rest of the world, and not have wandered about in strange countries, dwelling in tents and

feeding cattle. Had Moses considered this earth his home, he would not have renounced the honors and pleasures of Egypt, to consume his life in the deserts of Arabia. Had the martyrs regarded this earth as their home, they would not have roamed "in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth;" much less would they have been "tortured, not accepting deliverance," when by renouncing their religion they might have lived and enjoyed the smiles of the world. And did modern Christians look on this earth as their home and supreme good, they would regard it with far different eyes; and though they must consider it a contemptible portion, they would make the best of it, and not incur the derision of its inhabitants by their scrupulous sanctity. If the wondering world inquire why Christians separate themselves from the vanities which others supremely seek, let them know that the children of the immortal King consider not this earth as their home, but account the richest good it contains as trash compared with the heavenly inheritance. It is so filled with trials that they regard it rather as a prison in which they are confined for their faults, than as a paradise to make them happy. It is a world full of sins which exceedingly distress them, and they know that while they remain here they shall continue bound to this body of death. It is a dark world, enlightened with few rays from heaven, and in which a scanty portion of that good is enjoyed for which they so earnestly pant. They view themselves in an enemy's country, surrounded with snares and dangers. And

can they rest in such a state? O no: did they suppose they were always to continue here, their hearts would sink within them. Should their Father tell them that they might possess the whole world to eternity, but should never enjoy him or ascend to him, the doleful tidings would lay them dead at his feet. But far different prospects actually lie before them. Their Saviour has told them that mansions are prepared for them in the heavens. They believe the report, and live on the hope of soon ascending to possess them. They consider themselves placed in this vale of tears for a few days, only to prepare for that blessed world where they hope to spend an eternity. They feel themselves on the wing to be gone. Their lips are almost ready to pronounce the last farewell. They are ascending. Soon they will be out of sight. The earth is seen no more, and they are in heaven. O can it be a wonder that the ancient saints were so indifferent to their condition on earth? Is it not rather a wonder, when the world treated them thus and heaven stood full in their view, that their souls did not leap out before the time and flee away to their Father's arms? Especially when we consider,

II. What glorious things there are in heaven.—Who can comprehend the blessedness which God has "laid up for them that fear" him? Who can conceive how great a good must be bestowed to satisfy infinite benevolence? But though we cannot do justice to the subject, yet enough may be said to show that Christians are not mad when they give up the world as dross and pant after the heavenly rest.

In heaven a full and constant sense of God's favor, and uninterrupted communion with him, are enjoyed. In this world guilt and unbelief frequently represent him as an enemy, and sin is perpetually interrupting our communion with him. But in heaven there is no unbelief, no sin, no guilt unpurged. The Saviour is never hid. His nail prints and the desires of his heart constantly plead in the hearing of all heaven: and the saints fully know that their guilt is entirely and eternally washed away. Not a frown clouds the face of God. They see him to be filled with love to them individually, infinitely greater than ever throbbed in a mother's heart. If a faint glimpse of a reconciled God and imperfect communion with him on earth, afford such vast delight, what unspeakable ecstacies must transport the soul when it is permitted to live in his bosom. If joys like these are in heaven, is it any wonder that afflicted Christians pant to flee away and be at rest?

"Sure 'tis a heaven worth dying for,
"To see a smiling God.

In heaven the most perfect love and gratitude are exercised towards God. In this life Christians are tortured with remaining sin, and go mourning all their lives under this load of death. They would give worlds to be wholly delivered from it. But in heaven this perfection is enjoyed. In that blessed world they are all melted into tenderness and love. If a few faint motions of love to God on earth produce delights with which nothing else below the sun can compare, how far beyond all present con-

ception must be the blessedness of loving him with the whole heart and soul. The saints in heaven possess the clearest views of his character, and the most affecting sense of his love and mercy to them. They see the infinite value of that glory which Christ purchased for them, and the unbounded price which he paid for it. With what meltings of gratitude do they look up to the prints in his hands and feet and side, and down to hell to see the miseries from which his dying agonies delivered them; and then how do they cast their crowns at his feet and say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever." With what sweet delay do they dwell on the name of Jesus. With what ineffable complacency do they look up among the glories of his nature, and look abroad and see him diffused through all heaven. This is their delightful and eternal employment. Is it any wonder that the martyrs broke through the fiercest terrors of death to reach such a heaven?

The glorified saints possess the clearest apprehensions of the perfect and unchangeable happiness of God and of his kingdom. This is a source of the most pure and exalted delight. They are transported to see that though they cannot recompense God, he is his own reward; that he is all that reward to himself that he ever expected or desired; that he will be completely glorified, and all his purposes accomplished to his full satisfaction; that his

kingdom is safe and the universe blessed to the highest possible degree.

The saints in glory have attained to vastly greater knowledge than they ever possessed on earth.—While here, they longed to understand more of God and of the wonders of redemption; but now their capacities are filled with the heavenly science. They possess the clearest views of the character of God; of his infinite sufficiency for all the purposes for which it is desirable that he should live and reign; of the fitness of the system which he has adopted to accomplish every wise and benevolent end; of the transcendent wonders of redemption; of the infinite evil of sin and the astonishing reach of mercy. It is their constant employment to study into the works and ways of God, to observe the issues of his dispensations, and to read, through the universe, new lessons of his wisdom, goodness, and power, of his justice, mercy, and truth.

In heaven they enjoy a more perfect use of their memory than they did on earth. They remember the various scenes of distress through which they passed, and this renders their present rest the sweeter. They look back on all the dangers and enemies which beset them by the way, and this endears their present safety. They review those numerous seasons in which they mourned an absent God, and call to mind their many distressing doubts and fears; and this renders still more precious their present enjoyment of God and their assurance of his eternal love. They look back on the awful

conflicts which they had with temptation, and this enhances the value of their eternal deliverance. They recall to mind their abounding sins, and this renders divine mercy the more precious and amazing. They remember the many instances of God's tender care of them in their trials; how often, when every other helper failed, he came to their relief; how often, when they seemed on the point of being swallowed up by their enemies, he hastened to their rescue; and these recollections endear him still more to them and sweeten their communion with him.

The glorified saints enjoy the most perfect friendship with angels and with each other. They have no separate interests, and each loves his brother as himself. If it is so sweet to enjoy communion with Christian friends on earth, what will it be where this communion is perfect? There the least Christian calls Gabriel his brother, and is linked, as in one soul, with seraphim and cherubim. He beholds Adam and Noah, and converses with them of things before the flood. He walks and sits and talks with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with Moses and David and Daniel, with Peter and Paul, and hears them tell of the wondrous things recorded in the Bible. He lives in the same family with the martyrs, and holds the tenderest intercourse with those with whom he once prayed and wept and sighed for the present rest. What tender intercourse do parents hold with their children, and ministers with their people, whom they have been the means of introducing to that world. What ecstacies do long separated

friends enjoy at meeting where they shall part no more. O, says the newly arrived spirit, have I found you at last? Have we met and shall we part no more? This is far unlike the parting hour when I closed your eyes, and weeping said, I ne'er shall see you more. And this is far unlike the tedious days that I have spent on earth without you.—See the blessed spirits whose cares and conflicts on earth were one, and who lived and loved and prayed and fought together; see them seated on the banks of the immortal stream, recounting the trials of the wilderness. With what endearment do they look back on their common dangers and sufferings, and point to the places where they prayed and wept together. With what tenderness do they remember the sympathy and assistance received from each other by the way. And is it any wonder that the martyrs were eager to escape from the hands of their persecutors into that world of harmony and love?

This is the less wonderful when it is considered that heaven is a place of perfect rest, from which pains and conflicts are forever excluded. They had been long toiling in a wearisome world, and had known sorrows to the full. Was it not natural for them to long to fly away and be at rest? None of their sufferings have followed them up the heavenly hills. Their sorrows endured "for a night" and "joy" came "in the morning."

To complete their blessedness they have no fears that it will ever end. On earth a gloom was cast over every enjoyment by the reflection that it would

soon expire. But now some of them have been in heaven near six thousand years, and they have no apprehension that their joys are nearer an end than at first. On earth they were almost afraid to take the comfort of what little they had, lest they should soon exhaust the store. But now they do not hesitate to give themselves up to the full enjoyment of the boundless good. They look forward to its everlasting continuance, and probably to its eternal increase. There is something in the contemplation of eternal, increasing glory, that is "grand beyond a seraph's thought." Upon the supposition of an eternal progression in knowledge and happiness, the time will come when the smallest saint in heaven will be as much greater and happier than Gabriel now is, as Gabriel now is greater and happier than an infant. And still to increase without end. Imagination falters and turns back from the pursuit. And now judge ye: is it any wonder that the martyrs, in view of this "exceeding and eternal weight of glory," should shout amidst the flames on which they ascended to God? It seems from our text that while their bodies were struggling with death, they cast their eyes forward to the time when their dust should rise again. This leads me,

III. To contemplate the glories of the resurrection.

Wonderful, glorious, awful day! How amazed should we be to see its wonders suddenly break upon us. Such amazement will seize a careless world when the time arrives. And it is not far from us. A few more suns will bring it forward. Let

us contemplate it with as much solemnity as though its first commotions were now beginning to agitate the distant sky.

Time will be when all the martyrs and saints, as they are scattered over the heavenly plains, will suddenly hear the trumpet sound. They start at the transporting summons. Their hearts flutter with joy and great expectations. The day has come, say they, which we saw in the agonies of death. Suddenly all the heavenly legions gather round the standard of their Prince. The King is arrayed in tenfold glories. His artillery and furniture of war are prepared. With the grandeur of a God he leaves the heavens and places his throne in the region above this earth. The saints and angels gather around, with great expectations, to see the wonders which are about to unfold. The trumpet sounds again. The blast shakes the universe. The earth is affrighted to its centre. The planets are torn from their orbits. Worlds dash against worlds. The disjointed universe is in flames. The general shock has broken off the covering of hell, and the awful glories of the day break in upon the damned with unknown terrors. They are forced to ascend. The horrid forms come swarming forth. The saints shudder and crowd nearer to their Prince. The universal convulsion has opened all the graves. The dead bodies begin to move. The scattered dust is collecting from all quarters, and is flying in different directions to seek its kindred dust. The saints descend to find their bodies, now changed into glorious forms, resembling that of Christ; the

rebel host also get possession of their own, marked with haggard deformity.

Columns of rising dead now fill all the air, some with shrieks and some with halleluias on their tongues. When they approach the tribunal they divide, these going to the right and those to the left. An awful pause ensues. The books are opened. All the secrets of men are brought forth to light. Their sins of thought, word, and deed are exposed to an astonished universe. All the virtues too of the saints are found faithfully recorded, and are spread out to the view of approving angels. All the intricacies of God's providence are disentangled, and all his dispensations, explained, and that becomes the day of the "revelation of" his "righteous judgment." How gloriously do his wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness now shine in those things which once appeared confused and even hard. Amidst those awful solemnities, with what emotions do the saints look down and behold the earth in flames, which was once the scene of all their trials. With what feelings do the martyrs look down on those places where they were bound to the rack or the cross or the stake. Ah with what eyes do they now behold their persecutors, whom they see convulsed with horrors and crying to rocks and mountains to cover them.

The grand account is taken, and the Judge prepares to speak. With a face beaming like heaven he turns to the right: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." He turns to the left. A

thousand tempests lower upon his brow. The affrighted ranks fall back on each other and would gladly hide themselves in the eternal deep. Hell hears the sound and trembles through all her coast. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.——And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

O ye children of the immortal King, learn to look with indifference on all the scenes below the sun, and let them all be swallowed up in a view of eternity. How did this view transport the martyrs above their agonies. And where are they now? Do they now repent that they renounced the world and accounted themselves "strangers and pilgrims on the earth?"

Our subject shows the inconceivable happiness of the children of God. They are just on the verge of immortal glory. A few days more and all their sorrows will cease, and they will stand on Mount Zion with harps in their hands and crowns of glory upon their heads. Whatever convulsions shake the world,—whatever judgments perplex the nations,—*they* have abundant reason to "rejoice evermore." Children of God, be much in the contemplation of your future inheritance. Were your eyes constantly fixed on that blessed state, it would be impossible for every trifle to cast you down.—Look on heaven as near. One reason why the view no more affects you, is that you place it at a great distance. Did you know that you were about to enter it to day, the very thought would raise you

to it. Well, the time *is* near. Perhaps before the sun shall set you will stand on the heavenly hill with Abraham and Moses and David. And if heaven is *worth* so much, then let nothing else come in competition with it. Tread the world beneath your feet. Let your whole souls be engaged to secure the immortal crown. But above all, if you would be affected with these glorious realities, you must firmly *believe* the declarations of God's word; for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

But ye who have no part in these blessings, how "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked; "doomed to eternal fire, and probably to ever increasing torments: no Father in heaven, and no Saviour but him you have trampled under foot: the implacable enemies of God, and fit to be given over to hellish rage and to the society of devils. What will be your feelings when the splendors of that day shall break in upon your astonished sight, and you shall behold Christians admitted to that glory and you yourselves banished to hell? Would you not then give ten thousand worlds for the place of the meanest slave who has reached the heavenly kingdom? Now you may have salvation "without money and without price," but then it will be too late. O think of it in season. Hasten before the last trump shall awaken you to sleep no more.—Arise without delay and put your faces in the dust. Repent and cry for mercy, and submit to God, and stretch out your hands to Christ,—or forever die.

SERMON XX.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD I THOUGHT AS A CHILD.

I. Cor. xiii. 11.

When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things.

In childhood the mind, pleased with every trifle and void of care, vacantly pursues its little pleasures, and, blessed with ignorance of the ills and disappointments of life, looks forward with sanguine hopes to fairy scenes of happiness; while the bright and tearless eye, resting on the outside of things, sees a paradise in every lawn and grove. A recollection of these puerile delights is often cherished with rapture in future years, while the man, forgetful of the frettings and pulings of childhood, dotingly inquires, Why were the former days better than these? But he does not ask wisely concerning this. A virtuous manhood is much more to be desired than the state of children. It is ca-

pable of far nobler pursuits, of knowledge, enjoyment, and action more congenial with the ends of our being. The child has no high and manly aim, no cares for great and dignified things, little thought for his future well being either in this life or the life to come. His understanding is feeble, his knowledge is small, his pursuits and pleasures are useless to the world, his years are trifled away in pursuing airy visions, and he is a stranger to elevated and substantial happiness. He speaks as a child, prattling unconnectedly of his little concerns; he understands as a child, superficially and contractedly; he thinks as a child, incorrectly and desultorily; but when he becomes a man he puts away childish things. His taste relishes nobler objects; his conversation is more dignified; his conduct and pursuits are manly; his views and knowledge are enlarged. Spurning the shackles and toys of babyhood, he becomes perhaps a philosopher, and explores with astonished gaze, the works of his Creator. His excursive fancy, not confined to the policies and interests of kingdoms, wanders among the stars, and delights itself with the numberless worlds which revolve above his head, while his faith and knowledge are employed on the great affairs of the kingdom of God.

Such is the contrast by which the apostle represents the present and future existence of Christians. He was speaking of their imperfect knowledge and attainments in this life and the perfection of their state in the life to come; which he illustrates by the words of our text: "When I was a child I spoke

as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things;" to which he adds, "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

If the most eminent saints, while here, are in a state of childhood, how much more the rest of mankind. It is then the obvious doctrine of the text that the present life is only the infant state of man. In illustrating this position I shall show its truth,

I. In regard to mankind in general;

II. In regard to worldly men in particular;

III. In regard even to Christians themselves;

I. The position is true in regard to mankind in general. Man is a more noble being than he appears in this world, and was designed for nobler ends than he attains, or than his Maker accomplishes by him, in the present state. The all wise God would not have formed so dignified a race, and placed them in a world fitted up with such exquisite art, for no other end than that they should enjoy the little transitory distinctions and pleasures of this life,—that they should sustain such a mode of existence and intercourse for a few years, in sin and misery, and then drop into nothing, without either gratifying his benevolence in making them happy, or exercising his justice in punishing their sins. If he expended so much labor in creating them and the world they live in that they might be happy, this end is miserably defeated if there be no future state. If he created them for his own glory,

their present existence, unconnected with a future state, illustrates neither his wisdom, goodness, nor justice, but casts obscurity over them all. Men do not here receive the punishment due to their sins, nor arrive at the perfection either of their powers or of the happiness which they are capable of enjoying. Dismal are the prospects of that man who looks forward to no future state; who after sinning and sighing a few times more, expects to be swallowed up in the gulph of annihilation. Far other purposes had infinite wisdom in creating an intelligent race. The Author of their being, who designed them for immortality, placed them in this infant state, not for the good they could enjoy here, but to ripen for a glorious and eternal manhood. Their greatest growth here, compared with their future dimensions, does not transcend the size of children.—This life, instead of being the termination, is only the threshold of their existence. This world is only their nursery, or if you please, the cradle in which souls yet in swaddling bands are rocked for immortality. Could you see them launched into eternity,—could you trace their dimensions a few centuries hence,—you would behold these puny beings swelled to a stature which your present powers could not measure. How miserably do *they* overlook the dignity of man who contemplate him only in the present life. What wretched miscalculation to consume all their cares in making provisions for this infant state,—this mere birth of being,—this embryo of existence,—and neglect to provide for the happiness of a vigorous and eternal manhood.

II. It is particularly true of worldly men that this is their childish state. Their views, their tastes, their knowledge, their pleasures, their pursuits, all bespeak them children. Compared with the high and noble ends for which they were made, what trifles they are pleased with, what puerile objects they pursue. While I stand contemplating the dimensions and dignity of a glorified saint, I pronounce the wealth of Crœsus and the honors of Cesar to be mere play-things for children, and all the strife and hurry and noise of the world to be but the unmeaning motions and sounds of an infant. Are they not children? Mark with what vacancy of mind they pursue their little pleasures, without any dignified and manly aim,—what want of foresight and care for their future well-being,—how caught with the outside of things and puffed with airy hopes,—how dark their understandings,—how small their knowledge of what they were created to know,—how useless their lives. They have none of that sublime happiness of which rational minds are capable. Subject to disappointments and sorrows, the children often fret and cry. They speak as a child, they understand as a child, they think as a child. Ah when will they become men and put away childish things? Cast aside your toys and raise your thoughts to objects worthy of men, —to the kingdom and glory of God,—to infinite interests and immortal concerns. To pursue objects for which men were sent into the world, to employ the mind on subjects the most noble within the reach of its present powers, is certainly to lay the best

claims to the honor of manhood. Many who pride themselves on being men of honor, deem it manly to neglect religion, and account it weak and womanish to yield to the tendernesses and softnesses of piety. But they turn the tables. With powers capable of manly aims but devoted to childish play, they appear to angels as one would appear to us who at the age of fifty should busy himself in making houses in the sand. If they will not ascend to high and manly objects, it would have been better for them always to have remained children. A child is *satisfied* with his baubles: but they, possessed of capacities which nothing but God can fill,—which were made to be employed about the kingdom of Christ,—remain restless and uneasy with all their toys about them. If I were always to live on earth, and must be confined to its trifling objects, I solemnly declare that I would rather eternally remain a child.

III. It is true even of Christians themselves, and of the most eminent of them all, that they are only children in the present life. This is precisely the sentiment contained in the text. They speak as a child, they think as a child, and they understand as a child. They *speak* of divine things as a child, using expressions which no more reach the extent of the subject, than the prattling of children about the moon conveys a full idea of that luminary. They have no other language for these subjects than that of Scripture, which, being adapted to the weakness of our apprehensions, is little more than an association of images borrowed from sensible

objects. In this highly figurative language, which is necessarily imperfect because our imperfect minds could understand no other, they speak of God's eyes and hands and feet,—of his repenting, —of his coming down to see what is taking place on earth,—of his fury's coming up in his face. They speak of the worship of heaven in language principally taken from the temple worship of the Jews. But when they arrive at manhood, they will use a language expressive of things as they are,— a language no longer darkened with the shadow of figures, but taken from the very light of the subjects themselves, and as luminous as truth. No childish topics will then employ their tongues. They will converse only on noble subjects with noble personages.

They will *conceive* as men. Here their conceptions are extremely crude. They conceive of God as having the figure and features of a man,—as existing in a particular place,—as growing older as ages revolve. They conceive of the intercourse of spirits as being similar to that of incarnate beings. All their conceptions of heavenly things are largely mingled with ideas borrowed from sensible objects. But when they arrive at manhood, their conceptions will be correct. They will never indeed cease to be conversant with material objects. After the resurrection they will still possess material bodies. There will be a local heaven for the accommodation of those bodies. The glorified body of Christ will be the centre of this heaven, and the point to which their finite thoughts and worship will be more

particularly directed. But though limited by the finitude of their nature, their conceptions will be far more matured and perfect.

They will *understand* as men. In this life their understandings are feeble and contracted, — are darkened by ignorance, — are perverted by prejudice, — are liable to errors and misconstructions of the word of God. Christians here cannot agree on the plainest doctrines of divine revelation, and are split into contending sects. But in heaven their knowledge will be perfect, their prejudices and mistakes will cease, and party distinctions will be known no more. They will all see eye to eye, and be united in the most sublime and delightful views of divine truth. Here they are limited to a very imperfect knowledge of God's will, and are often pressed with doubts respecting their duty ; but there all duty will be made plain. Here their views are confined to a small circle ; there they will take in the universe. Here, with all the helps they enjoy, they know but little of God ; there they will see as they are seen and know as they are known. If the little knowledge of God which they here possess fills them with so much delight, who can conceive the ecstacy which will arise from the clear discovery, the enlarged views, the vast knowledge of him which they will then enjoy ;—beholding the face of that glorious sun without an interposing cloud,—stretching their eyes far and wide into the substance of his uncreated light,—with visual organs undazzled by his splendor,—with souls set on fire by the blaze of his glory. In this life their

minds can take in but little of the wonders of redemption, and small is their acquaintance with him who purchased them with his blood; but in heaven they will behold the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne; their delighted eyes will wander over his glories; they will approach him and lay their crowns at his feet; they will be united to him in the tenderest communion; they will have a much clearer view of the unfathomable wonders of redemption, and with amazement and transport will trace the heights and depths of this stupendous plan.

No longer limited to the hopes and anticipations of childhood, they will have arrived at the full attainment of their supreme good. No longer confined to the company of children, they will enjoy the society of the glorious army of patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs. They will be united in the strictest friendship with seraphim and cherubim, and be ennobled by intercourse with these highest orders of angels. No longer limited to the low pursuits of this infant state, all their faculties will be employed in the most noble parts of the divine service. Their understanding will be occupied in searching into the character and works of God; their affections will be exercised in ardent love and gratitude; their voices will be strung to elevated praise; their wills will be exerted in choosing God and his ways; their memory will be employed in looking back to this life and collecting materials with which to erect everlasting monuments to his glory. All their powers, which were imperfect in

this state of minority, will have attained their perfection: not that perfection which will exclude progress, but that which indicates a state of manhood. How vastly their powers will be enlarged, cannot now be told. Was Newton a child? Was Solomon a child? What then is a man? Could we approach the glorified spirit of the meanest saint that ever left these abodes of weakness and sin, we should be amazed at the magnitude of his powers. Perhaps we might see him to be greater than a nation combined. And these astonishing dimensions are probably but the beginning of his growth. I stand amazed as I trace that spirit through the ascending degrees of its eternal progression. I am lost in wonder and delight as I pursue its august destinies through immortal ages, and see it stretching towards God, widening, extending, rising,—until a spirit with the present ken of Gabriel could scarcely discern it in its glorious altitude,—until a spirit with the present dimensions of Gabriel would only be as an infant to a giant doubled a thousand times;—and still it is stretching away. From the summit of that elevation suppose it to look down upon this mortal life; how contemptible, how much like the toys of childhood would all its little glories appear. While it reviews its former attachment to earth and dust, its former puerile pursuits, yea its most fervent devotions, I hear it sing, "high in salvation and the realms of bliss," "When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

O my brethren, destined for immortality, raise your minds from earth and fix them on the heaven of heavens. As you march towards the New Jerusalem, let your eye be filled with the approaching glories of the place. Keep your thoughts above, where you are to spend a never ending eternity. Often contemplate the amazing destinies before you. Why those sighs and tears and low contracted griefs? Is it for the children of a king to be sad? You have reason to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I wonder you are not constantly transported. Consider what you will be a century hence. Consider what you will be a million of ages hence. I am rapt as I follow you through the ascending glories of eternity. And are you born to this? to dignity so august? to glories so unbounded? O debase not yourselves by sordid actions. Stoop not to grovelling pursuits. Remember what you are and respect yourselves. Do nothing that you will disapprove when you review your life from the high abodes of salvation. Awaken every sleeping faculty and press towards the glorious mark. You are acting for eternity and immortality is the prize. Drive on your lagging powers; quicken your tardy progress; "till you all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Amen.

SERMON XXI.

THE PILGRIM.

HEB. XI. 13.

These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

The apostle, in this chapter, was pointing out to the Hebrews the various operations and fruits of faith in the saints of old. A prompt obedience to the commands of God, renunciation of the world, and trust in the promises, were among the most prominent of these. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.—These all died in faith not having received the promises, but having seen

them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.—By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.—And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthae, of David also and Samuel and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.—And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise."

This was the character and condition of the ancient saints, those favorites of heaven of whom the world was not worthy. They were destitute of worldly good. They were despised, forsaken, persecuted. But they regarded it not, for they felt

themselves not at home, but strangers and pilgrims on the earth. The world was not the portion they sought, but they "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." I shall,

I. Inquire what it is to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

II. Suggest some reasons for doing this.

III. Urge the duty of believing and trusting in the promises of God.

I. What is it to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth?

A Christian's pilgrimage is a journey to heaven. To feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, then, is to feel and conduct ourselves as not being at home in the flesh, but as travelling on a journey to the world above. It is to tread the world beneath our feet and to soar to heaven in our affections. A wise pilgrim will not encumber himself with a load of toys which will only impede his progress towards home; which, instead of adding to his enjoyments, will only perplex him on his journey; and which at last he cannot carry into his Father's house to possess, but must lay down and leave at the threshold. A stranger on earth, if he is wise, will not expend his all in procuring the riches of the country, and in storing up an encumbrance of goods which he cannot carry with him when he returns, as he shortly must, to his native land. His principal object will be, (besides those temporary supplies which will support him by the way,) to lay in copiously those riches

which he can carry with him when he returns to his abiding habitation. As he is only passing through the country on a pilgrimage to a distant realm, he will not suffer all his affections to be engrossed by the transient objects which present themselves by the way; but his attention will be principally turned to the pursuit of his journey to the destined land. He will not be disposed, upon every freak and at every difficult passage, to turn back to the land of sorrow he has left behind; but will imitate the pilgrims of old who were unmindful of the country from which they came out, though "they might have had opportunity to have returned." He will not lay aside the manners of the country where he hopes to spend his days, and assume the manners of the uncultivated tribes through which he is passing. He will obey the direction not to be conformed to the world. He will not perplex his mind by interesting himself in all the petty cares of the men he sees in his way; but as Christ cleansed the temple of worldly objects, so he will cleanse his heart, which is the temple of God, of worldly attachments and cares. He knows he cannot cleave to these and pursue his journey, since he cannot serve both God and mammon. He will not be anxious to know what this or that man whom he meets on his journey says of him, or how he likes his appearance, since he only passes by him and is gone to be seen by him no more. If all the country through which he passes is disgusted at his foreign air and strangeness of appearance, it affects him not; since he is at once beyond their reach, and is soon to enter a

country where all are congenial in minds, language, and behavior. He finds himself surrounded by strangers, not at home; at a distance from his relations and his Father's house. He is not contented to remain where he is, but is eager to press forward to meet and embrace his friends and to throw himself into his Father's arms. He looks and longs and pants after home. O, he cries, when will the happy day arrive when I shall be at rest? How long shall these mountains, rocks, and long tracts of desert land lie between me and all my soul holds dear? How long ere I shall embrace my kindred and pay sweet homage at my Father's feet? How long shall the wild beasts of the desert howl around, and I be torn with the thorns of a foreign land? Come forth to meet me, O my Father, and help me, help me home. These are the feelings of a stranger on the earth, and these the breathings of a pilgrim after heaven.

II. I am to suggest some reasons why we ought to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

1. A pilgrim's way is the only way to heaven.—We are by nature as far from home as we are from God. In order then to find an entrance into the peaceful doors of our Parent's house, we must say with the prodigal, "I will arise and go to my Father."

2. Heaven is the only good worth setting our hearts upon,—the only place where unsullied enjoyment is to be had,—the only spot where untainted excellence is found. It alone contains pleasures

which will never fade away. The experience of ages, as well as the word of God, has taught us that all things below the sun are "vanity and vexation of spirit." Earth is a deceitful good. Riches are ever ready to take wings and fly away. Honor is a bubble liable to be dissolved by the arrows of envy. Pleasures, like flowers, when gathered die. Nothing is durable beneath the sun. Nothing is satisfying beneath the enjoyment of God. God is the sum of all good. It was the discovery of this truth which made the Psalmist exclaim, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He then who says of earth, Here shall be my rest, and to God, "Depart from" me, "for" I "desire not the knowledge of thy ways," sets a wrong value on things and is blind to his own interest.

3. There is a sweetness in feeling ourselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. It is sweet to feel ourselves not at home in the flesh, just on the wing to be gone, and arising to a better habitation. It is sweet to feel the world beneath our feet, to stand above it and converse with God. The man that does this is not indebted to the unsteady shifting objects of time and sense for his principal satisfaction, but possesses a happiness which the world can neither give nor take away. He can remain calm and unruffled amidst the changes of life. If earthly things depart, he says, They were made to die, and let them die. If the smiles of the world convert to frowns, he looks up with joy and sees a smiling God. He stands above the world, and, like

a man above the clouds, remains unmoved and unruffled while the winds and storms beat upon the world beneath. While his hope of heaven, the anchor of his soul, remains sure and steadfast, he cannot be tossed to and fro with disappointments nor sink under the burden of chagrin. He that trusts in the Lord shall not be greatly moved. What a happy opportunity has the pilgrim, while standing aloof from the world and looking with the eyes of a stranger on all things below, to notice the dispensations of providence, to see divine faithfulness unfolded in a thousand little circumstances unnoticed by the busy world, to search into the character, works, and government of God, and to learn himself by watching the secret movements of his own mind. When the world is shut out, he may retire within himself and survey the large dimensions of his soul. He may hold converse with the intellectual world and pity the world of sense. He may hold sweet communion with God, and taste the clusters of the promised land while yet in the wilderness. As he is a pilgrim by profession and makes it his daily business to travel heavenward, the happiness and glory of the heavenly world are more fully in his view, and he enjoys a double share of the blessedness which arises from a prospect of his future inheritance. He looks on heaven as near; the mild, yet brilliant glories of the place fill his mind; he is ready to depart; the earth dwindles to a point; he sees the approving aspect of his God smiling upon him. Then he exclaims in ecstacy, I feel the sweetness of being a pilgrim. This is

not my home. I am a stranger on the earth as all my fathers were. My journey will soon end.—Heaven already opens to my view. The resurrection is at hand.

"Lo I behold the scattering shades;
The dawn of heaven appears;
The sweet, immortal morning spreads
Its blushes round the spheres."

4. A stranger and pilgrim on earth has every thing that he needs; why then should he wish for any closer alliance with the world? God's favor is life, and his "loving kindness is better than life." He who enjoys him has all and needs no more.—The Christian has a promise that if he forsakes all for Christ, he shall receive in the present life a hundred fold. "No good thing will" God "withhold from them that walk uprightly." They shall possess in the present time every enjoyment which they could wish to possess did they know what was for their good. Not a single pain which would ultimately prove an evil, will be suffered to attack them; and every thing which actually does befall them will turn to their benefit. Whatever turns up in life, they are safe and they are happy. If God had not seen that strangers and pilgrims on the earth could enjoy the highest happiness consistent with their ultimate good, he would not have confined his children within so narrow limits. If a closer alliance with the world was a real good, he would not have bestowed it on his enemies and withheld it from his dear children. The patriarchs were his peculiar favorites; yet he gave them no abiding habitation,

but left them to wander about literal strangers and pilgrims on the earth. In this he meant them no harm, but intended through them to show to the world that a state of pilgrimage was consistent with the possession of every real blessing. What more does a man want than to enjoy every needed good while here, to be happy under the smiles and protection of God, to go on his way rejoicing in peaceful hope of a happier country and certain of a better home? What more does the pilgrim want to make him happy? What need has he to come down into the world in quest of enjoyment? Would a nearer connexion with the world render him more happy? No; for,

5. To relax into friendship with the world, to feel earth our home, and to say, It is good to be here, is very dangerous; as it draws the soul from God, clouds our sight of the glory of spiritual objects, exposes us to temptation, and is the chief cause of all our miseries. Every Christian knows the truth of this assertion. When we begin to think of taking up our rest on earth, of making this a long and happy home, we do not feel the pressing necessity of daily going to heaven for enjoyment; we discontinue our intercourse with the spiritual world, get away from God, throw ourselves without anchor into an ocean of cares, give ourselves up to be carried to and fro by innumerable disappointments, retire from under the shield of God, and are easily overcome by temptation. While the soul is in the presence of God, Satan dares not approach with his wiles; or if he should, he would be unsuccessful.

He waits for the soul to get away from God, and then makes his attack, as he did on Eve when absent from her husband, and on Peter while absent from his Lord. To be bound to the world is to be unloosed from God. Hence the Christian finds it no addition to his happiness, but a great increase of his misery, to forget that he is a stranger and to feel himself at home on the earth.

6. We are here in an enemy's country, while our dearest friends are in heaven. Will a man feel himself at home in a foreign land, confined in prison among enemies, while his father and his brethren are living at a distance in the happy mansion where he received his existence? Did the Church feel themselves at home in the wilderness, filled with serpents and enemies? Did Daniel feel himself at home in the lion's den, or the children in the fiery furnace? So neither should a Christian feel himself at home while surrounded by spiritual enemies and a persecuting world. Heaven is his home; heaven is the place of his rest. There his best friends, his kindred dwell; there God his Saviour reigns.

7. This earth was never designed for the Christian's home. It is a field in which he is sent to labor. Here he spends the heat of the day, and he cannot find his home until the evening comes and his work is ended. If this earth had been designed for the Christian's home, it would have been made a very different place. It would not have been filled with so many snares and miseries, but would have been rendered a peaceful, quiet, holy habita-

tion. But now God has prepared for him a better habitation, where nothing shall ever enter to disturb his rest, and where he shall feel himself forever at home. The Christian has only turned in here, like a wayfaring man, to lodge for a night; but heaven is his home where he has an eternity to spend. Eternity! eternity! O the boundless thought! How *can* we settle down in the dust as though we were always to continue here? How *can* we feel otherwise than as strangers and pilgrims on the earth?

8. The more of strangers we are on the earth, and the more intercourse we have with heaven while here, the more welcome and happy shall we be when we arrive at glory. The more we feel a stranger's weariness with the world, and the more we feel a pilgrim's pantings after heaven, the more we shall find our souls attuned to the harmony of the place, and with the more readiness and sweetness shall we, when released from earth, join in the employments of the new Jerusalem. If then to feel and conduct ourselves as strangers and pilgrims on the earth will make a whole eternity the sweeter, O let us yield the world to fools and emmets, and fix our eyes and all our desires on a better home.

III. Let us consider the duty of believing and trusting in the promises of God.

1. To believe and trust in the promises of God is an exercise of faith and an essential mark of a Christian. It is recorded as a characteristic of Abraham's faith, when Isaac was promised, that "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to

God." The promise was, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called;" yet when commanded of God he scrupled not to offer up his son, "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." Though the patriarchs died without seeing the promises fulfilled respecting Canaan and a future Saviour, yet they "were persuaded of them and embraced them." The very essence of faith is "the evidence of things not seen."

2. We should not distrust the promises of God on account of their not being yet fulfilled, or because at particular times we cannot see the fulfilment of those which relate to the present life.—It was never designed that the promises which relate to the life to come should be fulfilled at present. It is not fit that we should receive our reward till our work is done. It is not fit that we should be admitted at once to the promised land, because it is necessary for us to remain awhile in the wilderness to be cleansed of our Egyptian idolatry. Our being continued here awhile before we have all the promises fulfilled upon us, affords an opportunity for the trial and confirmation of our faith and patience. It affords us an opportunity of learning our dependance on God,—of learning the evil by tasting the bitterness of sin,—of discovering the faithfulness of God in coming to our relief in a thousand scenes of difficulty and trial, and in coming down, from time to time, into the deep pits where we are fallen, to pour into our souls the sweetness of his forgiving love. Our temporary continuance at a distance from the promised land,

will heighten the pleasures of our final release and render heaven forever the sweeter. Neither ought we to distrust the promises which relate to the present life because at particular times we cannot see their fulfilment. The sum of these promises is, that no real evil shall befall us, that no good thing shall be withheld from us, and that all things which do occur shall work together for our benefit. Sometimes the Christian is so harassed and perplexed that he is ready to think that God has turned his foe or has forgotten him. But let him remember that God's ways are not as our ways. Necessary afflictions are marks of parental faithfulness. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." So short sighted are we in regard to the design of particular dispensations, that "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them." Many events which at first wear a threatening aspect, soon prove to be but mercies in disguise. Others which we can never account for, we may still believe have the same benevolent tendency. In short, however our feelings may be crossed, nothing can evince a failure of the promise, that "no good thing will" God "withhold from them that walk uprightly."

3. The want of a realizing belief in the divine promises, is the great reason of our impatience at the thought of being strangers and pilgrims on the earth. When the promises are hid behind the cloud of unbelief, and the troubles of the Christian warfare crowd upon us, we are ready too frequently to say, with the desponding Asaph, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in

innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning." The service of God at such times appears unprofitable; and as unbelief is always selfish, we are apt to go back into the world in quest of a more profitable pursuit. A Christian cannot turn back into the world while the promises are full in his view. These animate him in his course and make him feel satisfied with the loss of the world. A full belief of the promises rendered the ancient saints contented to remain strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Had they lost sight of these through unbelief, they would have sought for a portion in the world and asked alms of flesh and sense.

4. There is a sweetness in believing and trusting in the promises of God. Then the soul is raised above the world and looks down with meek contempt on all its frowns. The Christian then feels as secure and immovable as unchanging truth and almighty power can make him. When he reflects on his present condition, he knows it could not be otherwise consistently with his highest ultimate happiness. When he looks forward into life, he fears no approaching danger, for he knows that no real evil can ever befall him. When he looks into the heavens, he says with calm serenity, Yonder world of light was made for me, for other things have told me I was a child of God. Yonder stands my Father's throne. Yonder do my friends surround it with low prostration. Yonder I shall soon be and share in all their joys. Let hell rave and earth ferment, I fear them not; my Protector liveth, and soon I shall bless him face to face.

5. The promises of God are absolutely unfailing. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of the promises shall never fail. They are sealed by the blood of Christ and recorded in the presence of heaven. God can as soon deny himself as he can deny his children their promised inheritance or a single good stipulated for them here. Not one of his promises has ever been known to fail since the earth was. The patriarchs lived long in this benighted wilderness before they possessed their promised reward. During their whole lives they waited patiently for the promises of Canaan and a future Saviour. And long since have all these promises been fulfilled, and the blessed men have gone home to possess the eternal rewards of their faith and patience. With equal certainty will God fulfil his promises to all his children. He will infallibly bestow upon them every needed blessing here; at the best time he will unfailingly bring them home to the promised rest.

Men and brethren, if these things are so what shall we say of ourselves? And dare any who have the Bible in their hands deny their truth? Let us then,

I. Reprove ourselves for our worldly attachments, and for not feeling more like strangers and pilgrims on the earth. How prone are we to feel ourselves undone when the world frowns. How inconsolable when any thing breaks in upon our temporal prosperity. If wealth or honor or pleasure or friends have fled, our hearts are all unstrung saving the mourning strings. We are ready to say

with Micah, "Ye have taken away my gods,—and what have I more?" What more could we do if earth was our eternal home? Do we not know that this life is but a breath, a point, a nothing in comparison with eternity? Do we know that we are born from heaven, and hope soon to return to abide there forever? Christian, you are almost there. Why then do you come back to earth? What can you find by your return but disappointment and chagrin? Do you find the climate more congenial, or are you so soon tired of what you find above? How then can you bear to dwell above forever? Can you not endure to live a stranger to the earth a few days? How then can you be willing to be an eternal stranger to it? How will you endure to see your idol consumed in the general conflagration? Can you survive its loss and be happy when it is no more? Why then can you not now be happy without it? Come, put away your idol, (it is only a vexation,) and learn to be a pilgrim. Come out from the world, flee from Sodom, and escape to heaven.

II. Let us reprove our impatience and despondency at a distant view or disbelief of the promises. How often, even while we hold fast the idea of our adoption, do we despond at the many difficulties which lie in our way to heaven, and grow impatient that the promises are yet seen afar off. How often do we doubt the fulfilment of those which relate to the present life. How apt are we, in view of danger or trouble, to say, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." I shall not be supported.

The evil will certainly come, and it will be a real evil. O that I could direct all matters myself.—Such secret workings of unbelief, though they do not come out to public view, may often be traced by an attentive observer of himself. Alas that we should thus give the lie to all the sacred promises of God. Christian, it is "impossible for God to lie." It is as impossible for him to cease to love and protect you, as it is for him to cease to love and defend himself. Talk not of your unworthiness. If you had a righteousness of your own, what need of the righteousness of Christ? If your unworthiness was a bar to your receiving favor, you would long since have been in hell. Trust then in God and fear not. Though heavy afflictions are sent, your Father means you no harm. They shall subserve your interest. Say then with the patient Job, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him." Wait a little longer and you shall see a fulfilment of all the promises. Heaven shall soon open its gates for your admission. The resurrection morning is hastening on. The books shall be opened. The divine dispensations shall all be explained.—And when they are understood, you shall find there never was a failure of a single promise which your Father made you. You will then rejoice in every thing that ever befell you in your lives. You will wonder at your former unbelief and bless God for all his faithfulness. Strange, you will say, that I should so often doubt whether the God of all truth would fulfil his word. How could I doubt? How could I fear, when God was taking the readiest way

to bring me to the possession of all this glory?—Christian, you have nothing to do but to disconnect your affections from the world, place your hopes and desires in heaven, devote your lives to God, leave all your cares with him, and "rejoice evermore." Praise and joy and trust are the best returns you can make to God for all his love. Fulfil your duty to him, and he will fulfil his promise to you. Give him no cause to distrust you, and you need never distrust him. Take him for your all, and he will be all to you. He will be your Father, your Friend, your Protector, your support while here, and your everlasting portion beyond the grave. Amen.

SERMON XXII.

WHOM HAVE I IN HEAVEN BUT THEE?

Ps. LXXIII. 25.

Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.

This Psalm was composed by Asaph, one of the three chief singers whom David had appointed in the house of God. The good man had experienced a severe trial from the infirmities of his own heart; which trial, together with the manner in which he was relieved, is described in this beautiful Psalm. He had been "envious at the foolish when" he "saw the prosperity of the wicked," and had indulged in unworthy complaints against divine providence. "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish.—Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency; for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened

every morning." This temper of uneasiness and distrust arose so high, that in a retrospect upon it he acknowledges, "My feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipped.—So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." The manner in which he obtained relief from this agitation, was by repairing to the sanctuary of God, where the light of divine revelation shone. Here he discovered, as through a window which opened into eternity, the awful end to which the wicked with all their prosperity were hastening. Here also he learned the final rewards of the righteous, and saw the mysterious inequalities of divine providence cleared up. The glory of God's faithfulness and truth so opened on his soul, and the comparative emptiness of all earthly things, that with more than recovered spirits he exclaimed, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

My object will be, in the first place, to explain more fully how we are taught to feel by this example of Asaph,—how such a temper will operate and what effects it will produce; and in the second place, to suggest some reasons which urge to such a temper.

I. I am to explain more fully how we are taught to feel by this example of Asaph,—how such a temper will operate and what effects it will produce.

The Psalmist in these words expressed supreme delight in God as his all sufficient and only portion. "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" The only

heaven I wish above is but to see thy face. Let others form confused ideas of the upper world, and desire it as a place where something is to be enjoyed, they know not what: but I know what a heaven I desire. Could I ascend to the highest heavens and find the presence of my God withdrawn, it would be no heaven for me. The only reason why I pant to ascend above the sun and all these ruinable worlds, is that I may bask in the sunshine of his smiles, and forever behold the source of light without one envious cloud between. Let me but sit at his feet and gaze upon his lovely face, and cry, with unutterable wonder and gratitude, "My Lord and my God," and I ask no more. Let me but take some humble station in his glorious kingdom, where I may sit and read his name, where I may view his infinite happiness and glory and see his beloved kingdom blest, and my soul will be filled.

"And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." How is this? Was it then a matter of indifference to Asaph whether his friends lived or died,—whether he enjoyed the comforts of life or perished with hunger? This was not literally and precisely his meaning. But what he intended may, I conclude, be summed up in the following ideas. First, that there was nothing among all the charms of earth which could prevent him from wishing to depart and be with the Lord. Secondly, while continuing on earth, he desired nothing besides God in a comparative sense. His soul was at that moment so filled with the supreme excel-

lence and glory of Jehovah, that all earthly things were put out of view. Thirdly, he desired nothing besides God in that he coveted nothing which he considered distinct from the emanations of God. Did he desire food and raiment and friends? he desired them chiefly as divine goodness expressed, as God existing in his outward bounty.

Such a temper of supreme delight in God will operate in unreserved and universal submission to divine providence. While God is more beloved than all other objects, the withholding or removal of every thing besides him will not awaken a spirit of unsubmission and rebellion.

While the Christian has such supreme delight in God, he will not be inordinately leaning on friends or wealth or any worldly object for enjoyment. No high expectations will be formed except those which centre in the supreme good. Lightly valuing the things of time and sense, he will scorn the restless pursuits and unsatisfied desires of the covetous; and holding the commands of God in supreme veneration, he will practise deeds of liberal charity. Sensible that prosperity gives and adversity takes away only those things which are least desirable, neither by prosperity nor adversity will he be greatly moved. Ever assured that God, the supreme good, is safe, he will dismiss all anxieties respecting future changes, and come what will, he will "rejoice evermore." Calmly resigning the management of all affairs into hands dearer than his own, he passes his days in unruffled serenity, and knows not the distrusts of jealousy nor the uneasiness of

unbelief. Having a greater regard for the divine will than for any earthly comfort which that will can bestow, he has learned "both how to abound and to suffer need," and "in whatsoever state" he is, "therewith to be content."

The result of this supreme love to God will be faith, trust, self-denial, obedience, and an unreserved consecration of all that we are and have to him, to be disposed of according to his pleasure, and to be employed in his service, how and when and where he is pleased to appoint.

II. I am to suggest some reasons which urge to such a temper.

The infinitely wise and benevolent God is worthy to be the object of our supreme delight. There is more in him to be desired and to be rejoiced in than in all created beings and things. The whole creation has drawn all its glories from him. And can it be supposed that he has imparted more beauty and excellence than he possesses ? When our eyes rove abroad over the charming scenes of nature, and traverse the wonders which shine in the heavenly orbs, we may well exclaim with the half-inspired Milton, "How wondrous fair ! Thyself how wondrous then !" In God there is every thing which can satisfy and transport the immortal mind. What is the world to him ; its pomp, its splendors, "and its nonsense all ?" What are the treasures of India and all the glories of Greece and Rome, compared with the fruition of that God whose smiles fill heaven and earth with gladness ? Possessed of him, the imprisoned beggar, with all his griefs, is

rich and happy; devoid of him, kings and emperors are poor and wretched. Let every earthly comfort depart, yet while we can enjoy the immortal source of blessedness, we are blessed still, we are blest indeed. While walking out with Isaac to meditate at the evening tide,—while beholding that glory which Moses saw on Horeb and on Pisgah,—while worshipping him whose faithfulness and truth were seen by Abraham on Moriah, and whose glories appeared to John in Patmos,—while overcome with the magnificent majesty which rushed on the view of Habakkuk,—while melting away in the sweet ecstacies of David in sight of the mercy and faithfulness of his heavenly Father,—while triumphing in him who was announced by the songs of Bethlehem and by the joys of Simeon's bursting heart,—while from our streaming eyes we pour forth gratitude to the Sufferer of Gethsemane and Golgotha, and ascend to heaven with him who ascended from Olivet,—O how poor and worthless do all mortal things appear.

The claims of God to our supreme affection are further supported by his exceeding great and unnumbered mercies. He is the God of all our revivals, of all our deliverances, and of all our comforts; the God of our fathers and the God of our children. Innumerable mercies, distinguishing us from most of our fellow men, mercies affecting to angels,—have filled our lives. He supported us in our infancy; he led us through all the windings of our youth; his watchful eye has continually been upon us in riper years. Through all our days

he has nourished and brought us up as children. He has been with us in six yea and in seven troubles, and brought relief to our distresses when every other helper failed. From countless dangers has he delivered us. He sent his Son from his bosom to bear our sins in his own body on the tree. From what an abyss of pollution and wretchedness have some of us been raised by his pardoning love. He has bestowed upon us the invaluable gifts of his word and ordinances. By his unspeakable grace we have enjoyed the sight of his work revived,—sinners plucked as brands from the burning, and brought to unite their young hosannas with the praises and joys of their fathers. Where shall we end the enumeration? More numerous are his mercies than the stars which look out of heaven. Has the world, have any of our friends, has all creation done for us what our God has done? Surely if kindness and mercy can engage our hearts, we lie under the most pressing obligations to say from our very souls, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

From the truth and faithfulness of our divine Benefactor, we have full assurance that if we get divorced from all our idols and wed ourselves to him alone in holy trust and service, he will make ample provision for our support and comfort,—he will abundantly recompense our fidelity and renunciation of the world. We have no occasion to apply to any other comforter, to any other protector, to any other guide, to any other portion. He will be to us such a portion as will fill and satisfy our souls.

He will be all that we need and all we desire. We shall be blest beyond all previous conception. We shall be full; can need no more and can hold no more.

It is one of the lamentable marks of human weakness that men are so habituated to recede from the eternal centre of rest and to wander abroad in quest of enjoyment. Dependance is withdrawn from God and placed on other objects, which may not be obtained, or if obtained are ever liable to be lost again. The mind, thus torn from its centre and following deceitful meteors, rambles, it knows not whither,—is ever pained with uncertainty and trembling with dubious fears lest the objects in which centre all its desires should be lost. In proportion as men thus place their hopes in the creature, they find themselves the prey of restlessness and misery. To forsake the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns, is a sure prelude to disappointment and vexation. Ah when will we be wise? When will we dismiss all our vain dependances and make God our only rest and portion? When will we thus obtain that happiness which we have long sought in vain? Could we look with indifference on all the shifting scenes beneath the sun, on prosperity and adversity, on loss and gain, and make the sincere appeal, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," how happy might we be even in this vale of tears.

Knowing the claims which he had to our supreme affection, God has asserted those claims in his holy word, and strictly commanded us to love him with

all the heart, and in comparison with him to hate father and mother, wife and children, and even life itself. And as he is infinitely the greatest and best of beings, this supreme regard to him is his due. It is perfectly right and fit, and what we owe to him, to make him the object of our supreme delight, to rejoice that he holds the throne, to resign ourselves with all our interests to his disposal, to feel that we have enough and abound while possessing him, even though every thing else be taken away, and under all our trials and disappointments, to be quiet as a child that is weaned of its mother. It is infinitely unreasonable to set up any private interest in opposition to the interest of the universe,—the interest and wishes of God and his kingdom. Of what consequence is it for infinite wisdom and love to sit upon the throne if they may not govern the world? What does it signify for us to proclaim our joy that the world is under divine direction, if we will not submit and consent to be governed?

Such supreme delight in God and his government had Enoch and Noah, and Abraham and Moses, and David and Daniel and Paul. Not one of them could receive the divine approbation and enter into rest on easier terms. And on no easier terms can we enjoy the friendship and protection of Asaph's God in the present life; on no easier terms can we enter the portals of the heavenly city. But the sure reward of thus choosing him for our portion, will be the unfailing friendship and enjoyment of him in the present life, and when all these perishable worlds shall be blended in one common grave. Then shall

they who have chosen him in preference to all others, be everlastingly united to their glorious centre, and shall plunge into that ocean of glory which they have chosen for their all, and lose themselves in him. Then shall they know how wise their choice who prefer the immortal God to the husks that were made for the flames. Then with what hearty sincerity and bursting joy will these eternal notes go round, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Let this assembly pause for a moment, while each one solemnly inquires with himself whether he has chosen the God of Asaph for his only portion and supreme delight, or whether his affections and hopes still linger among the vanities of this lower world. Do our souls stand ready, at the word of God, to break away from every scene of this enchanted ground, and leaving the world behind, to soar to regions from which all worldly things are forever excluded? Do we, like Simeon and Paul, pant to ascend to the full possession of the supreme good? Why do we wish for heaven? Is it that we may live forever at home with our God, and after a long and tedious separation, be forever united to the centre of our souls? Is it this, or is it some other heaven which is the object of our imagination and desire? And can we sincerely appeal to the Searcher of hearts, "There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee?" Have we a solemn conviction that we have chosen him for our supreme good and everlasing portion? Or do we still remain misera-

bly encumbered with the lumber of earthly objects, —wretchedly ignorant of the Source of our being, —encompassed with darkness which has known no morning,—wickedly and fatally straying from the only source of happiness,—vagrants in the region of confusion, night, and misery? Ah wretched souls, whither do ye wander? Why prefer the night of chaos to the glories of the uncreated sun? Why flee from the fountain of happiness and love in pursuit of wretchedness and eternal war? Where can such bliss be found as you have left behind? Wherefore do you speed your course from the Author of your being as though all misery lived with him? Whither would you hurry in the wildness of your distraction? O return, return. Seek no longer for happiness in shunning its only source. O return, return. Let planets break loose from the attractions of the sun, and wander wildly and without order into the regions of night; but let not immortal souls break away from the attractions of the eternal Sun, to wander in wild and dark vagaries, in wretched confusion and ruinous disorder to all eternity. O return, while return is possible, to the substance and fountain of light and blessedness. Let the attractions of divine love draw you nearer and nearer, until you shall fall into the glorious Sun, and lose yourselves to all eternity in this beatific union. Renounce your alliance with worms and dust, sustain a glorious resurrection from the dead, and learn to say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

The subject will apply itself to backsliding Christians. Ah why should they who have seen his glory and known his love, and seen the world eclipsed by his charms, so often forsake the fountain of living waters for broken cisterns? Why should that which they have known to be the supreme good, be left for things which they know cannot profit? In better hours you have avouched the Lord Jehovah to be your God and portion: you have vowed eternal fealty and subjection to him. Your oath is recorded in the rolls of heaven. Why then violate your promises thus attested, and forsake the source of happiness for comfort which you know is no where else to be found? Awake from these enchanted slumbers. Pursue no longer the unnatural course which carries you from your life and from the centre of yourselves. And what can you find abroad to allure you from home? Precisely what the dove found on leaving the ark,—no place on which to rest the sole of her foot. May you, like her, soon grow weary of the damp and cheerless regions without, and return on lagging pinions, and with mourning notes plead for an extended arm to take you in. Consider also from what mercies you have fled, and through what obligations you have broken away: and then, with the melting griefs of the Psalmist, give it in charge to yourselves, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

In the last place, the subject addresses itself to those who have deliberately and heartily made choice of the supreme good, and who have never,

by the mists of earth or hell, lost sight of the good they have chosen. Hail, happy souls! All hail, ye unrivalled few! From my heart I give you joy. Ye have found the pearl of great price. Ye have found that treasure which worlds might be sold in vain to purchase. Accept our congratulations.—Accept the congratulations of angels. Let your souls arise and shout for joy; for all the treasures of the universe are yours. The infinite God, with all that he possesses, is made over to you by a covenant well "ordered in all things and sure." Let your pious hearts be comforted under the loss of all terrestrial vanities. Let them shout for joy under all trials and crosses. For under the loss of all things, you possess all things still. The immortal God is yours; and in him you have all and need no more. Be not disheartened at the trials and conflicts in which you may be involved. Soon will you emerge from them all, and like the sun breaking from a cloud, forever shine forth in the kingdom of your Father. It is in our heart to bid you God speed, and encourage you to go on and renew your wise and virtuous choice of the God of all benignity and blessedness. Be emboldened to take a larger and still larger portion of the supreme good. God has said "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Be satisfied with this portion, and murmur not though sinners take the rest. Never indulge vain regrets for the objects you have left behind. "Delight" yourselves more and more "in the Lord, and he" will more and more give you "the desires of" your "heart." And whatever allurements so-

licit you astray, whatever terrors arise in your course, whatever crosses you may have to encounter, never suffer yourselves to be unsettled from the habit of hourly saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Amen.

SERMON XXIII.

FORSAKEN THE FIRST LOVE.

REV. II. 4, 5.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

These solemn words were a part of the message of the risen Saviour to the church of Ephesus.—That church had been planted by the apostle Paul, who at first continued there three years. Afterwards it was left to the care of Timothy and the elders who received from Paul that affecting charge at Miletus. At a later period John resided among them, and continued there till he was banished to Patmos by the emperor Domitian, about three years before this message was sent. Under all these advantages it is not to be supposed that the Ephesian church had departed from the Gospel in the articles of their faith or in the forms of their worship. Paul

had indeed forewarned them that after his departure "grievous wolves" would enter in among them, "not sparing the flock;" and that even of themselves men would arise "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." And we know that Cerinthus and Marcion were there, who denied the divinity of Christ. There were also Nicolas and Hymenæus and Alexander and Phygellus and Hermogenes. But men of this character who had belonged to that church, had been excluded; and the church in this very message are commended for their marked reprobation of the deeds of the Nicolaitans. Nor yet does it appear that the members of that church had fallen into any open immorality, or had relaxed in their attendance on divine ordinances. On the contrary, they are highly commended for their many labors, their patient sufferings for Christ, and their resolute resistance of those who had grossly departed from the Gospel in faith or practice. "I know thy works and thy labor and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted." Amidst this constellation of excellencies one spot appeared: they had forsaken their first love. That tender and fervent affection which they had felt in the days of their espousals, had grown cold. While sitting under the ministry of the heavenly minded John,—while bleeding under ferocious persecution,—they grew cold. This is the only charge

brought against them,—the only thing for which they are not even commended. This it was which drew upon that beloved and suffering church the stern reproof and awful threatening of the text: "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent:" that is, I will *unchurch* thee; a threatening which has long since been fulfilled, though upon a generation then distant; for where is now, and where has long been, the church of Ephesus?

Although Christians in their general course grow in grace, yet there may be times after their conversion when they are in a frame less holy than at the first. A great proportion of these Ephesians were doubtless real Christians, and yet they had grieved and offended their Saviour by forsaking their first love. They do not appear to have sunk into actual lukewarmness. This character belonged to the Laodiceans, and is noticed in a far different manner. But here you see a church somewhere between Laodicean lukewarmness and the fervor of their first love; and at this alone the Saviour is so offended, that, dear as they are to him on account of their many labors and sufferings for his sake, he solemnly threatens to come unto them quickly and remove their candlestick out of its place, except they repent. I shall,

I. Consider the greatness of the sin of coldness in Christians, and how offensive it is to God.

II. Inquire how we are to escape from this dreadful evil.

I. We will consider the greatness of the sin and how offensive it is to God.

But let us first find the persons that answer to this description. The subject has nothing to do with the professor who has apostatized to error or open vice, or has withdrawn from the assemblies of the saints. *He* is a Laodicean or something worse. But the person respected may be supposed to be always in his place in the house of God. He prays in his family and in his closet. He frequently attends the meetings for conference and prayer, and is regarded in general as an amiable and exemplary Christian. But he has lost the fervor of his first love. In the hour when he first found himself delivered by a Saviour from eternal death,—when first that heavenly countenance looked in upon his darkness covered with smiles and charms,—when first he dropped the calculation of eternal wo and found a title to heaven in his hands,—O, said he, I never shall lose the remembrance of this hour and this deliverance. If I forget thee, O my Saviour, let my right hand forget her cunning: let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth when it ceases to be employed in thy praise. Then his soul, full of tenderness and devotion, could wander over the glories of his Saviour's character, and sit and weep at his feet. The attributes and government of God appeared perfect, and his grace most amazing.

Every sentence in the Bible had a meaning; every doctrine possessed a charm; every promise was sweet. In communion with God and his people he felt that he could spend a whole eternity. Prayer was his breath; and he looked forward to the meetings with his brethren for prayer and praise, with all the sweetness and impatience of love. He could not look abroad on a world lying in wickedness but his eyes would be filled with tears, and he must seek some secret corner where to unburden his soul in prayer. He felt his heart united to his Christian brethren and to all mankind. He was melted into forgiveness to enemies. He longed to devote his property, his influence, his life, to the honor of his Redeemer. He was jealous of every thing that might grieve the divine Spirit, and watched his lips and his heart continually. He loathed every sin, and stretched forward with insatiable desires after the perfect possession of the divine image. But now all the glories of the divine nature seem little to affect him. The dying love of Christ is contemplated with dreadful indifference. He can look upon a world lying in sin without any great distress, and without one agonizing prayer for their deliverance. He feels less love for his Christian brethen, less love for mankind at large. His eyes can rove over those pages which contain a history of God's reign, the records of all his mercies, the charter of all the believer's rights, without seeing a glory there. His prayers are cold and heartless and difficult, and little else than mockery. He can hear words sung which might well employ an an-

gel's harp, without one emotion. He has scarcely any realizing sense of eternal things, and finds his heart darkened with much remains of infidelity and atheism. Those blessed meetings for prayer and praise are no longer pleasant,—are often neglected. His exertions for the salvation of men are feeble and sluggish, and he seems almost to have made up his mind to leave the world with God without an anxious thought. In a word, both his love to God and love to man are dreadfully abated. This is the very person whom the Saviour is this moment regarding with unutterable displeasure; and if he were to break silence and send a message to him to-day, it would be the very message contained in the text: "I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

The great sin and offensiveness of this frame of mind will appear from the following considerations.

1. You have no right to feel this indifference towards God or man. God never gave you a right. He constantly stands over you and says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." He requires the sweetest and most compassionate regard for your neighbor, and the most adoring and grateful affection towards himself, every hour, and has enjoined these with the same authority with which he says, "Thou shalt not kill." *You* are wont to complain of your dul-

ness as a misfortune, or at most an infirmity; but he considers it in no other light than as rebellion. *You* are wont to think that the regulation of your heart lies so far beyond your power, that if your hands are clean you may acknowledge the coldness of your heart without a blush; but he considers your heart as much under the control of his laws as your hands, and as strenuously demands a right temper as a right practice, and no more excuses your indifference than your crimes. In a word he has given you no more right to feel for one hour this unconcern for a perishing world, this coldness towards himself, than to steal or murder.

2. This coldness is not a mere defect, it bespeaks some degree of the positive action of the most polluting passions. There is no such thing as the soul's wandering from God but in pursuit of idols. It never leaves the fountain of living waters but for broken cisterns. This coldness then betrays some remains of idolatry; and idolatry comprehends the whole action of selfishness; for the undue love of the creature as the instrument of personal gratification, is at once the essence of idolatry and the very definition of selfishness. This coldness betrays pride. A heart humbled in the dust before its Maker, never yet was stupid. And nothing but such a humiliation before God can demolish pride. Where stupidity prevails there pride must lurk. And who can doubt that coldness betrays unbelief? Did not unbelief exclude a sense of the glories of God and the love of Christ, what heart could remain unaffected? Thus this indifference is the immediate

effect of the four leading sins of a depraved soul; selfishness, pride, idolatry, and unbelief. If such a state is not sinful, what in the universe can be?

3. It is a dreadful abuse of God. It is passing by his infinite glories after other objects. It is slighting his adorable perfections. It is disregarding his authority, his pressing, moving, solemn, awful commands and entreaties. It may seem hard to charge all this upon a Christian merely because he is cold; but it seems thus only because we have been long accustomed to see men cold, and by inveterate habit have lowered down the standard of duty. But let us go back to first principles. Let us have come into existence, as the angels did, in the immediate presence of God, and have always seen his glory, and seen creatures adoring at his feet or swelling their transported praise. Let our minds never have been familiarized to the instance of a creature turning away from that blaze of glory, from the dreadfulness of that majesty, from the sweetness of that love, to follow idols. Then let such a sight be presented as a cold Christian, standing in the presence of God unaffected, and reaching after the world: let all the evils of the heart which go in to work this declension be laid open at once; and then how would the sight appear?—Should we not pronounce it a greater abuse of God than any language can fully express?

4. It involves all the guilt of base ingratitude. It is the returns of one whose name was written in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world, when he was not there to speak for himself,

—when none was there to speak for him but the Being who is thus abused. It is the returns of one who was cast out in the open field, and left there, under the influence of a disastrous birth, to die; by whom, when there was no other eye to pity or hand to save, Jesus passed, and spread his skirt over him and bid him live. When you had done nothing to move his love more than others, he came out to seek you; he separated you from your former companions, and delivered you from eternal death, and put a title to heaven in your hands. O then you thought you never could forget him. You gazed upon the prints in his hands and feet, and heard him say, All this I bore for you. And then how did you sit and weep at his feet and sob out your thanks. But where are you now? Are these the returns he expected from you? O the dreadful ingratitude. No creatures in the universe but redeemed sinners *can* show such ingratitude as this.

5. There is in this thing the violation of an oath, or a solemn breach of covenant. In better hours you stood before the Lord and called heaven to witness that till the day of your death you would love him better than father or mother or life. Could you covenant less? Had you any authority to covenant less? This was certainly your covenant; and it was so recorded in heaven. You were then standing by the foot of the cross as represented in the holy emblems. You put forth your finger to the blood which issued from his heart and sealed your solemn covenant. And how have you kept your vows? Ah the infinite guilt! No creatures

perhaps on earth are capable of guilt so great as a Christian bound to God by oaths sealed with blood.

Under all this guilt the eyes of Christ meet you. It is an awful thought. I tremble as I express it. Let not imagination dare to play about this sacred spot. In this solemn stillness of the divine presence let our words be few and guarded. *But Christ is angry.* O the dreadful displeasure with which he contemplates the cold Christian this moment. I hear him say to such a one; "Remember —from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

II. Let us inquire what is to be done, and how we are to escape from this fearful condition. Had there been no way of escape, I would not have opened my lips. I have brought all this before you, my dear brethren, only to obtain a hearing while I endeavor to point out the way of escape from this awful coldness and this dreadful guilt.

The first thing which you have to do is to *remember from whence you have fallen.* Set yourselves down fixedly to reflect on the days of your espousals. Call to mind the tenderness of your love to God and man, and compare it with your present stupor. Remember how the world then appeared, into which you are now so deeply plunged; how the realities of eternity then stood before you, which are now so concealed; how the truths of that word affected your hearts, which is now a sealed book; how much you delighted in the company and con-

versation of the children of God, and in conferring with them on the things of your Father's kingdom, which are now insipid, and exchanged for communion in business and conversation about the world. Self-complacency has often whispered in your ear that the change is produced by the coolness of maturer wisdom. But let me test the truth of that suggestion by a few decisive questions.—Have you now as much love to God or man, or as much faith? Do you delight as much to commune with God? Do you feel as thankful to him? Have you as deep a sense of your sins? Do you as fully realize the joys of heaven or the miseries of hell? Do you see the truths of the Bible to be so glorious or so real? Do you feel as tender an affection for your Christian brethren? Do you feel as much compassion for a perishing world? Does your heart melt so readily into forgiveness to enemies? Are you so active in doing good? or does your heart beat with so high a desire to advance the prosperity of the Church and the salvation of men? If not, bless not yourselves in the thought of your maturer wisdom. You have certainly declined from everything which had the *appearance* of faith and love: and if any difficulty arises from the known truth that Christians grow in grace, it is a difficulty which presses against the soundness of your hope. You have certainly declined in every thing which *appeared* like faith and love; and if real Christians cannot thus decline, the question is forever settled, —*you are not a Christian.*

Having ascertained how much you have fallen,

the next step is to *repent*. This must be no ordinary repentance. You must come down into the very dust. You must mourn and weep at God's feet; and forgetting all other cares, must give your whole souls to humiliation and sorrow; resolving to lie in that posture till the return of his pardoning love, whether it be for a day or a month or a year; refusing to wander abroad among other truths even of a religious kind, till you have thoroughly settled this great controversy with your Maker. For one who has wandered thus, there is no getting back to a state of reconciliation with God,—there is no getting back to heavenly affections,—but by going through the valley of humility and measuring over all its solemn length. Begin then this day the work of repentance in earnest, and set apart this week and following weeks to this special duty, till peace is restored with your offended Saviour. If you linger long in this exercise, think not the time lost or your progress retarded. A month spent upon your face, would carry you forward more than your ordinary pace would do.

The next thing required is to *do your first work*. You must actually return to the faith and love of former days. This obligation is laid upon you by all the authority of God, who makes no allowance for your dependance,—who accepts no plea of inability,—but demands all this with as little ceremony as if there was no Spirit and you were independent, —with as little ceremony as he commands any outward action. But you must go to him for strength. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God that

giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." For this strength you may go to him freely. "What man is there of you whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." A firm belief in this is the very faith required. "Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

"*And do the first works.*" This was spoken with all the authority of the Godhead. "And do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Do you hear this, indifferent Christian? Unless you repent and return to your first love, he may come unto you quickly and break up your church-standing, either by taking you away, or leaving you to fall into open sins and forfeit your Christian privileges. Where are we? In what a solemn condition do we stand? Right under the eye of God, and this awful threatening ringing in our ears. It is too late to say, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber," when the sword of the Almighty is at our breast. We thought it would be in season to awake at some future day;

but what think we now? "Else I will come unto thee *quickly*." While I speak he may be hastening to meet us. What a solemn condition are we in. An hour's delay may prove fatal. Instantly burst those chains which bind you to the world. Break up your wretched worldly calculations. Awake from sleep. Inquire what there is for you to do to advance the interests of religion and pluck souls from eternal death. Break, as from a burning house, from that stupor and fear of man which can demur about coming out from the world and engaging thoroughly in religion. Rouse all your powers and come up to the help of the Lord. Whatever you do you must do quickly,—for the Judge is at the door.

SERMON XXIV.

THE DOVE.

GEN. VIII. 8, 9.

Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground: but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

The pigeon or dove is held up in Scripture as an emblem of the Church. This species of birds are distinguished by their simplicity and innocence. They are gentle, inoffensive, easily subdued and tamed, and quick to forget injuries. Strongly attached and faithful to their mates, they seem disconsolate under separation, and are easily reconciled when a breach happens between them. They are the most fruitful of birds, bearing almost every month. Their food is the purest seed or grain, their drink the fairest waters, and they loathe the filth on which the raven riots. They are weak, defenceless, exposed to injuries, beset with fears, and ad-

dicted to mourning. When pursued by ravenous birds they will not fight, but tremble and flee to their windows. In eastern countries they often seek a refuge in caves and holes of rocks, where they nestle and abide. Of all birds they are most attached to home; and if carried to almost any distance and then set free, they will steer straight and rapidly to their favourite cabin.

In allusion to these dispositions, Christ calls his Church his dove, and hails her, sheltered as she is in her eternal refuge, "O my dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs." To denote at once her meekness and tenderness, he represents her as regarding him with "doves' eyes." Attached and faithful to him, she sits solitary when he is absent, and when at any time she has grieved him by her follies, she is eager to be restored to favor. Her fruitfulness is in good works. Unable to live on the ordure of sin and worldly objects, she quenches her thirst at the waters of life, and can relish only "the finest of the wheat and—honey out of the rock." In this vale of tears she is addicted to mourning on account of her sins and the miseries of her race. "Like a crane or a swallow" so does she often "chatter;" she mourns sore like "a dove." With inextinguishable desire she cleaves to her home, the bosom of her God; and when driven from it by the hurry of her passions, nothing, though worlds rise between, can prevent her from rushing back and seeking again a retreat in her father's arms. Weak and defenceless in herself and exposed to injury,—

disinclined to strife and incompetent to the rough encounter, she fears and trembles and flees to hide herself in her eternal rock. Like the gentle spirited Psalmist shrinking from his robust enemies, she often pants with the desire, "O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I fly away and be at rest."

With these several marks of resemblance, a dove may not improperly be considered as the emblem of a Christian. So the ark, in which the Church was sheltered from the storms which swept a wicked world, may, even with the consent of the apostle Peter, be considered as a symbol of Christ.—The circumstances recorded in the text, of the dove's leaving the ark, finding restlessness abroad and returning with instinctive eagerness to that friendly refuge, have been employed, without incurring the censure of fanciful allusion, to illustrate the wanderings of Christians, their consequent uneasiness and glad return. I will not say that the passage was originally intended to be applied in this manner; but if it furnishes an apt illustration of truths obviously taught in other parts of the Bible, it may lawfully be employed for such illustration.

I. First then the dove wandered from the ark; and Christians alas are too prone to wander from Christ. In this state of imperfection and sorrow they are not so happy or so wise as to abide constantly at home. This happiness is reserved for a better state. O that it were now here. But God knows it is far otherwise with us. Here Christians must have their turns of wandering, that they may

learn the depths of their corruption and their unutterable ill deserts; that they may learn the evil by tasting the bitterness of sin; that being weary of a world of pollution and trouble, they may pant after a world of holy and ceaseless rest. Here they must have their turns of wandering that they may more fully discover their need of a Saviour, while they stand amazed at the grace which could stoop so low as to reach and raise them to heaven; that they may obtain a more affecting sense of the patience and faithfulness of God which bore with them and brought them through; in a word, that they may be fitted for a world of everlasting humility,—be qualified to unite in the praises of redeeming love, and fully learn that lesson which all things were created to teach, *that they are nothing and that God is all in all.* Were they made perfect at once, and were never to endure the struggle of two co-existing and contending principles, they could not obtain so exquisite a sense of one of these truths.—The wisdom of God will therefore appear in leaving in his militant people passions capable of being enkindled, and appetites of being enticed, by the various objects which inhabit these regions of seduction and crime. But ah *their* guilt, which nothing can excuse or diminish. Redeemed as they have been by a Saviour's blood; separated and distinguished as they are from the world,—from all the creatures of God,—with a title to heaven in their hands,—with all the promises clustering upon them,—with crowns of glory ready to drop upon their heads; knowing also as they do their Saviour's love,

and that all their happiness lies in communion with him, and all their misery in wandering from him, yet they will wander. They will turn their backs on their Lord, their life, and stray in pursuit of airy forms, the sprights of their own distempered fancy. They do not break away at once; they slide gradually and imperceptibly from him. First they relax their vigilance: then some constitutional sin, which is always the first to live and the last to die, begins to move: next their closets and their Bibles are sought with less zeal and tenderness: then their conversation becomes less spirited: the world revives its faded charms: their sense of everlasting realities becomes stupified; visible things fill their eye: those twin sisters that were born in heaven, faith, hope, and charity, languish about their hearts; and before they are aware vast regions have risen up between them and God.

II. It was not without an *object* that the dove left the ark; she went to seek *another rest*. It is not without an object that Christians wander from Christ; they go to search for rest in other things. Alive at every point with feelings and tastes which were never made for heaven, and which only earth can gratify,—which are naturally loud and importunate for their objects, and though for a moment silenced by the voice of a present God, were not destroyed; no sooner is the voice which stilled them retired, than this swarm of inbred desires renew their clamorous demands for gratification. By help of the imagination, (that mental necromancer, —that traitor which stands ready to lend his mystic

aid to any rebel in the soul,) each brings his object before the eye, arrayed in charms not its own, and then, more enamored still, presses for permission to embrace it. The soul, half seduced, yields a reluctant consent, and the worldly affections scatter and seize their respective objects. Some more delicate tastes rest on the beauties of a landscape, and toy with the works of God without ascending to him; others, of a more social cast, place friends and society on the throne: others start in the race of ambition: others dart upon the gains of mammon: others pursue the fickle and ever varying phantom of pleasure. All unite in seeking a paradise on earth in which the mind can rest without ascending to God. This earthly paradise, which glitters and dances in the eye, is the false meteor which has allured many pilgrims from their way. The bright deceit keeping still ahead, can never be overtaken, and the luckless wanderer too late finds himself involved in difficulties from which it is not easy to escape.

III. "But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot." Though some of the mountains stood above the waters, she could find no food adapted to her nature,—no convenient cabin for repose. She wandered unsatisfied and uneasy, till she returned on lagging pinions, and mourned at the window for an arm to take her in. It was quite different with the raven which went out about the same time. He felt no uneasiness for what he had left behind,—no restless desires to return to the ark. He could flap his wings and exult that he had re-

gained his liberty. Not a look of desire did he turn towards his former prison. He wheeled and circled through the air as blithe as joy itself, snuffing the grateful fumes of human flesh and searching for carcases upon the mountains.

Here is an emblem of one of the most characteristic distinctions between a Christian and a hypocrite. Both may wander; but the state of their minds is very different. The hypocrite can neglect his closet and his Bible, can loosely treat the holy Sabbath, and abandon his former strict and regular habits, with little disturbance to himself. He can live very composedly without the presence of Christ, without a heart that dwells in heaven, without thoughts that hold intercourse with the skies. His affections are earthly; his cares are earthly; his calculations mostly relate to earthly objects; his conversation is earthly and often frivolous. He selects society that is vain and worldly, in preference to the pious and spiritual. None can tell wherein he differs from a man of the world. Still he is composed, cheerful, and gay. He is *contented* to barter communion with heaven for the diversified pleasures of the world, and with various expedients stills the remonstrances of his conscience. "Why, who can expect always to be rapt in religious flights? We are not angels but men, and must shape our minds to the circumstances of this inferior state." There are hours when conscience *will* be heard, but he has an answer ready to meet her reproaches: "There are many that do worse." If he falls into acknowledged sins, these are "only the ordinary

slips of imperfect nature,—the spots of God's children." If he commits crimes in secret, such as, were tears in heaven, would make angels weep, why "David and Peter did as bad;" or he raises some error to justify his crimes. Raven like he can riot on the filthy morsel of worldly objects, and feels more happy in his present liberty than in his former confinement. If he is restless, it is not to return to the ark, but to find more prey. You never hear him mourning like doves in the valleys. He is not apt to be sad. His countenance tells you that his heart is gay. Perhaps he scoffs at pious sorrow as the morbid glooms of superstition. Now if this be a dove, tell me, ye that can, what it is to be a raven.

Far different is the temper of wandering Christians. With desires which reach to heaven and which only God can fill, they feel an immense and "aching void." They wander from object to object, but are not satisfied with any. They engage in new enterprises, but their way is hedged up with thorns so that they cannot find their paths. They enter into company, but in the midst of society they are alone. They try festivity, but "even in laughter" their "heart is sorrowful." Every amusement is insipid; every enjoyment is cankered at the root. As well might the earth disclose her cheerful landscapes without the sun, as a pious soul be cheerful without the presence of God. Whatever the world is to *sinners*, it is forever spoiled for *Christians* as a place of rest. In that blessed hour when the light of heaven first broke in upon their dark-

ness, it obscured the glory of the world and ruined it finally as their dependance and portion. In the constitution which God has made, he appears determined that his children shall be happy in him or be miserable. He seems to have passed an unalterable decree which confines their enjoyments within these limits. True, their improved tastes may enjoy his bounties and his works, and that in a purer and more sublime degree than men of the world; but it is not with a worldly spirit,—not with the same view and estimate of the world that carnal men entertain. And when the presence of God is withdrawn this enjoyment of his works is departed with it. Then their solitary and pining souls can say with David, "My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread.—I am like a pelican of the wilderness:—I watch and am as a sparrow alone upon the house-top." Or if they have lost their sensibility, still God vexes them with his arrows. He will not suffer them to find rest for the sole of their foot in any corner of creation, until they return to the ark from which they have foolishly and wickedly strayed.

IV. The dove at length returned, forced back by the prevalence of the waters; and wandering Christians will surely return to Christ, and not unfrequently are they driven back by the waves of affliction. That love which chose and separated them from the world,—that power which first broke the chains of their bondage,—that covenant in which every divine perfection is pledged to complete their salvation,—all are engaged to recover them from

their wanderings. Were they hid in the remotest corner of the earth;—were they, in the act of fleeing from God, arrested like Jonah and deposited at the bottom of the mountains; the eye of Christ would search them out, and his hand would bring them to his holy temple. He who commands the resources of the universe,—to whom all nature is a magazine of arms with which he can make war upon his creatures; he can select from an infinite variety of weapons, those with which he may choose to smite his straying children and chastise them back to his arms. A child may be taken,— a wife, —a parent; all that he has in the world shall be removed, as surely as the Lord loveth him, before he shall be suffered to live and die away from Christ. The love which is engaged to reclaim him does not want means, and will not be resisted. Neither the corruptions of the heart, nor the pollutions of the flesh, nor the allurements of the world, nor the snares of Satan, shall be able finally to separate a Christian from the love of Christ.

V. When the dove returned and mourned at the window, did the patriarch shut the bowels of his compassion against her? No, "he put forth his hand—and pulled her in unto him into the ark." And think you that Noah had more compassion for a stupid bird, than the Saviour of the world has for his disciples and members? Will he allow his turtle dove to sink in the floods when she returns and mourns at his window, and complains that not a place in the wide world will furnish her a rest for the sole of her foot. He who, when she was

a raven, gave his life to transform her into a dove, will not, when she is a dove, see her perish, sighing and pleading by his side. When she comes home fleeing before the tempest, or trembling at the talons of a pursuing foe, he will put forth his hand, and with a tenderness which Noah never felt, pull "her in unto him into the ark."—He feels a love for her, wandered as she has, infinitely too great to be expressed. Was ever an infant, after a long unnatural absence, unwelcome to the arms of its mother? That wonder may be; but as the God of truth and grace liveth, returning Christians shall never be unwelcome to the bosom of Christ. That hand which wiped the tear from a weeping world,—that hand which stanched the wounds of a bleeding race, will receive them, will quell their alarms, will wipe the sorrows from their cheek, and lay them to rest upon his heart. The throbbings of their breast are still, or are changed to commotions of joy and love. A heavenly calmness, and peace that "passeth understanding," are descended upon their conscience. See them hang upon his arm. They look up with smiles and tears into those eyes which first looked them into repentance; eyes which still fall on them with the sweetness of heaven, with the tenderness of Jesus.—Where are now their late guilty fears and horrid forebodings? They are all passed away like a restless dream, and now they have awoke in their Saviour's arms to immortal hopes and joy. They have awoke, after a dream that they were poor, and found themselves the heirs of all riches. And now

are they confounded and open not their mouths any more for shame, because the Lord is pacified towards them for all that they have done. O blessed morning, and blessed be the God that spread its golden light upon the hills. It is well for us that we have a Saviour who "restoreth" our souls, who "leadeth" us "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." "Though" we "have lain among the pots, yet shall" we "be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." Blessed tidings for broken hearts that are mourning and sighing for an absent God. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God." Soon will he return "like a roe or young hart upon the mountains." So he *has come*. He is here. He stands before you this day and spreads his wounded hands and invites you to his bosom. What prevents you from rushing into his arms and losing your sorrows amidst the joy of that embrace? Can you elsewhere find a better rest? You have searched the world and you know it is not there. But when all other places exclude you,—when in the whole creation you are not allowed one point on which to rest the sole of your foot, this faithful bosom,—this last resort,—always offers you a safe retreat.

Come gather around me, ye beloved but foolish children who have wandered from your Lord, and hear the message which I bring you from him and the remonstrance which I present you in his name.

Had you not known that rest was to be found only with him,—had not experience taught you the vexations and miseries of wandering,—you would have been half excused. But in better hours you have tasted his love,—you have lain in his bosom,—you knew that a departure from him was a plunge into a thousand woes,—was abandoning a delight which an angel might gladly have cherished. Apprized of all this, you have slipped from your Saviour's arms, and slid, as your folly drew you, into dangers and perplexities. And where are you now? Dissatisfied with yourselves and with the world around you; dark, guilty, restless, and alone.—Where is the blessedness which once you spoke of? Where the light that cheered your cloudless morning? Where the calm and happy hours of communion with God which you once enjoyed, while your eye, fixed on heaven and filled with glory, marked with transport your eternal home? All, all departed, and changed for night and tempests and fears. And this is not all. You are preparing a *future* rod to chastise your folly: you are preparing smarts and anguish for yourselves. And better that you should be driven back by a whip of scorpions, than be allowed to wander still. Ah why will you fawn and court and pursue a world that treats you with such harshness and disdain? Gentler treatment would you have had from Christ. He would have cherished you, and soothed you, and sheltered you from a world in arms. Why then did you leave his friendly bosom? Did he give you a cause? Had he been to you "a wilderness,—a land

of darkness?" Has he merited such treatment at your hands? Ah, had he thus neglected you when your interest was at stake, where but in eternal misery would you now have been? Arise, ye wretched wanderers, and return. Shake off this drowsiness and sloth; strip away the film from your eyes; tear the world from your hearts; and arise to action and to comfort. Think of the service which you owe him who served you in death. Think of the invaluable interests of the Church which are in a measure committed to you. All this time your usefulness sleeps, while the world is dying around you for want of your prayers, your zeal, and your godly example. Look at the stupidity of your children; see the growing irreligion of your houses; mark the looseness of your streets; (streets and houses in which the voice of the Son of God has been often heard:) and here you are, (*some* of you I fear,) sleeping over the distressing scene, with a heart as stupid as death and as cruel as the grave. In the name of God, if that heart ever felt,—if those eyes ever wept,—awake and feel and weep. Come, return to the ark of your rest and bring your families with you; for a storm is gathering: I hear the roar of approaching floods: step into the ark or you are swept away.

SERMON XXV.

MANNA.

Rev. ii. 17.

To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.

The hidden manna is Jesus Christ, the bread of life, including all the blessings of his purchase. He is called by this name because the manna which supported the Church in the wilderness was a lively type of him. The application of the name of the type to the antitype is not uncommon in Scripture. Thus Christ is called David, and the high priest, and the lamb slain, and the passover. Many are the features of resemblance between Christ and the ancient manna.

Did this manna descend from the skies? Christ is "the living bread which came down from heaven." For though his human nature commenced its existence on earth, and his divine nature could not change place, yet by the union of the two na-

tures in one *person*, it became true that the same *person* that had eternally lived in heaven appeared on earth; the same Mediator that had chosen the heavens for the principal scene of his manifestations, at length manifested himself in this world. Before, he had appeared in heaven; now no Mediator was to be found in the universe but in the streets of Judea and Galilee.

Was the manna provided for people in a desolate wilderness, who had a long and wearisome way to pass before they could find their rest? Christ and the blessings of the Gospel are provided to solace a company of pilgrims who have to wander a while in this thorny maze, and to encounter all its dangers and hardships before they reach their heavenly home.

Was the manna provided for people who had no other supply, who were reduced to the greatest straits and must have perished without it? So Christ was sent to rescue those who were in a perishing state, who had no other helper, and must eternally have died without that provision.

Was the manna sent to a nation who felt their necessities and realized their dependance on heaven for relief? So Christ is provided for those, and none but those, who feel themselves to be poor and wretched and miserable and blind and naked; who renounce every hope of helping themselves and fix their dying eye on him alone. He was anointed to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to comfort all that mourn.—The manna was not sent to the full-fed Egyptians,

nor to the Amalekites or Amorites, the avowed enemies of God, but to the holy people, the Church. And Christ is not sent to benefit the stout hearted and the obdurate. He will not take the children's bread and cast it to dogs. A rebellious world, however they may expect deliverance by the blood which they trample under foot, will find a dreadful disappointment. None but the obedient and believing can partake of the hidden manna.

The ancient manna was as much the daily food of the meanest of the people as of the princes of the tribes. "Man did eat angels' food," or as it is otherwise rendered, "the bread of the mighties;" intimating, as the advocates of this construction believe, that the common people enjoyed as free a use of the manna as the heads of the congregation or as Moses himself. In like manner the believing beggar has as free access to Christ as the prince on his throne. Many of the children of God are doomed to coarse and scanty worldly fare; but they enjoy as rich a share of the bread of life, and fill as honorable a place at the table of the Lord, as the great and noble of the earth. Here they need not stand behind the crowd, but are as welcome and will be as kindly treated as the most honorable. Most honorable, did I say? Who in the kingdom of Christ are more honorable than the fishermen of Galilee? Here the scale of merit is reversed. In the kingdom of him who estimates every man according to his worth, a broken heart, a heart swelling with love to God and man, is reputed more honorable than an understanding distended with human

science, than coffers filled with golden treasure, than a character emblazoned with worldly glory. To cast discredit on the scale by which the world estimate merit, our Saviour for the most part passes by the great and noble, and chooses "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty:" for "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." The poorest Christian in this assembly will be as welcome as the rich to the feast now prepared,—as welcome to come daily to the Gospel banquet. Here is food, here is an inheritance, which cannot be taken from them. Though the fig tree should not blossom nor fruit be in the vine, yet this unspeakable privilege to feast on the body of Christ and to draw refreshment from the fountain of eternal love, would still remain. No change of fortune, no blast or mildew, no rust corrupting or thieves breaking through to steal, can filch this blessedness from them; a blessedness which in the midst of poverty makes them richer than the wealthiest monarchs without it. It seems like profanation to call an heir of glory poor. The treasures of the universe are his.

The manna was bestowed freely, without money and without price. This cannot but remind us of that heavenly invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Had Gospel blessings been put up at any price, they

never could have been obtained. What have a poor bankrupt race with which to purchase? a race as poor as sin can make them. Had they much it would be too little; but since they have nothing, what can they do unless they receive freely? All the prayers ever made by sinners since the fall, all their strivings and tears, are infinitely too small to purchase one smile from heaven. And yet thousands are wearying themselves to obtain salvation by their own works. With what indignation would God have seen a Hebrew coming and offering him money for manna. Sinners must consent to come as beggars and to receive freely. And freely they may receive. Not a sinner in this house needs to perish. Let none plead spiritual poverty as a bar. The poverty of the Hebrews did not prevent them from obtaining manna. Christ died that the unworthy might live; and none but the unworthy can receive his grace. Urge no longer as a bar the only thing which makes a successful application possible.

The manna was poured down plentifully. There was enough to supply more than a million of people. In like manner the blessings of the Gospel are sufficient, not only for the deepest wants of the most destitute, but for a whole world of sinners. There is atonement enough in the death of Christ for all, merits enough in his obedience, love enough in God, room enough in heaven. What pity then that any should perish. What pity would it have been for thousands of Hebrews to starve while heaps of manna lay piled up at their door. Let

none stay without, complaining, when the whole nature of God is open to give them room. O that some poor sinner would this day become convinced that his own is the fault if his starving soul is not filled with the bread of life.

Notwithstanding the great supply of manna, none could be benefitted without taking pains to gather it. So God may be merciful, and Christ may die, and heaven may be full of comfort, and yet if men will not receive the Gospel all is in vain. A Saviour may plead, the Spirit may invite, ministers may preach, and Christians may pray, and yet if sinners will not hear, they must die none the better, but all the worse, for these means of grace. None must think to lie still and trust to the mercies of God and the mediation of Christ. It is as impious as it is fatal to presume on neglected mercy. Men must lay hold of it by the hand of faith, or it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorah than for them. How long will an unbelieving world stand by the side of infinite treasures without putting out a hand to receive, and then cast the blame of their destruction on God and say, He made us what we are and we cannot help it?

The manna must be gathered every day. How much soever was gathered at once, none of it was fit for use on the morrow. It bred worms and became corrupt. The same necessity is laid on us to apply for the bread of life every day. How much soever a Christian receives to-day, he will have none to-morrow without a new application. He cannot live on past experiences without the present

enjoyment of God. Old discoveries will not supply the soul with light and life when faith and prayer decline. When the Christian through much humiliation and agony, has obtained a feast, he is too apt to be satisfied and to neglect to wrestle for more. He imperceptibly slides away from God, and before he is aware finds himself in darkness and the prey of temptation. His departure was easy, but his return must be accomplished by long and wearisome toil. This resting in present comforts is one capital reason why Christians do not steadily enjoy communion with God. They should wear out life in continued applications for the bread of heaven.

At a certain time the Hebrews became cloyed with the manna and madly looked back to the flesh pots of Egypt. God in anger gave them the desires of their heart, and sent them quails until the meat was ejected from their nauseated stomachs: and while the flesh was yet in their mouths, he swept away many of them with a plague. In like manner Christians sometimes lose their relish for heavenly things and begin to look back to the pleasures of the world. And sometimes God in anger gives them the desires of their heart. He withdraws his presence and increases their worldly comforts, and gives them a chance to try what the world can do for them without a God. And this he does until worldly objects and worldly prosperity itself become loathsome. And then when they seek him he hides his face, and seems to say, You preferred the world to me, and now you may have the world

without a God. And this he does until they are ready to cry, If thou take away thyself take every thing else away: these husks only mock my misery. While under this discipline, other judgments are often sent to punish them for lusting after idols which they had sworn forever to renounce.

These observations respect only the *outward* circumstances of the manna; let us follow the comparison into a consideration of its nature and uses.

Manna was the bread which supported natural life, and Christ is the bread which supports the spiritual and eternal life of his people. When the Jews said, "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness," Jesus replied, "*I* am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." In order that life might flow from him, it was necessary that his body should be broken and his blood shed. His broken body and flowing blood are as essential to the life of the soul, as meats and drinks are to the life of the body. Hence the expression, "My flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed."

The manna was capable of satisfying the craving appetite of the Hebrews. So Christ and his salvation are admirably fitted to satisfy the desires of an immortal soul under the circumstances of our fallen race, and in a right temper and view of things.—And nothing else can satisfy it. Let a man, under a strong sense of his sin and ruin, be presented with earthly kingdoms; they are all like jests to a dying man. Let him attempt to pacify his conscience by a round of self righteous duties; it is all

in vain. But let him get a view of Christ and his fulness, and he eagerly cries, Give me this and I ask no more: give me this or I die; give me this and I live forever.

The manna was very delicate and grateful to the taste, "like wafers made of honey." But more divinely sweet is the bread which came down from heaven. The Saviour of the world is the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely. "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." The divine charms which shine in the face of Jesus Christ, the heavenly truths and objects which he reveals, delight and ravish the soul as nothing else can do.

The manna was so wholesome that no Hebrew received injury from eating it. It rendered none sick or infirm, but contributed to the health of all. In like manner the Gospel is of sovereign efficacy to secure the healthful vigor of the soul. In proportion as it is received, the soul is healed of all its sinful infirmities and confirmed in immortal health. No injury is derived from living on Christ. The distresses which are peculiar to Christians come not from receiving him but from not receiving him enough. When the soul is intemperate in the use of worldly fare, it is sickly indeed; but as soon as it returns to Christ, it rises up into the undying health of the sons of God.

The account we have of the manna is, that "the people went about and gathered it and ground it in

mills or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it." Thus after it was bruised and broken, and prepared in the fire, it was served up to feed the Church of God. One cannot read this account without being reminded of him who was "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities." He was sorely broken on the cross; in the fire of affliction he was prepared to become the bread of life; and from that fire he is served up to feast his beloved Church. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." He was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." The Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted." "For the transgression of my people was he stricken." "The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."

When you behold at this table the consecrated bread, which was once cut down by the reaper, and then beat out by the thresher's stroke; which was broken to powder between the grinding stones, and then prepared in the fire, and is now served up and broken again before our eyes to furnish a feast for the Church of God, will not your melting hearts have in remembrance the friend who died on Calvary to sustain your sinking lives? Will you not contemplate those dreadful sufferings through which he passed to provide this feast for you? Let his infant cries call you to the manger, where the Creator of heaven and earth is cast out with the cattle of the stall. The great architect of the universe

reduced to the reputed son of a carpenter! He who dwelt in eternal repose toiling at a wearisome trade! The Son of the living God charged as an accomplice with Beelzebub! Follow him to the garden. What causes that blood to burst through the agonizing pores? It is not guilt but love. He sees divine wrath pointed, not at him, but at a world which he tenderly loves. He sees that wrath, like wreaths of convolving smoke, darkening the face of heaven. Before his mind is painted a world writhing in the flames of hell. And if a mother would be tortured to behold her infant withering in the flames, no wonder that this view of divine wrath against a world dearer than a mother's infant, should press out the blood from his anguished heart.— Attend him to the judgment hall. The Judge of the world arraigned at a creature's bar! That face which reflects the brightness of the Father's glory, is defiled with spittings. He at whose feet prostrate angels vail their faces, is mocked by knees bent in derision. The rough thorns are thrust through his temples. The scourge of wires tears the flakes from his bleeding shoulders.— Through the live nerves the dreadful spikes are driven. For six long hours the whole weight of his body hangs suspended on these agonizing cords. And all this because we had sinned. All this to deliver us from the ever-burning lake. Dear suffering Lord, was ever love, was ever grief like thine?

And now, my dear brethren, can we approach

this memorial of our suffering Lord with unaffected hearts? In this glass shall we behold him crucified before our eyes and be unmoved? This bread is the manna of Gospel days, the symbol of the living bread which came down from heaven. Receive it with strong desires to feed on the bread of life. This cup represents that blood without which there is no remission. Approach it with unutterable desires for pardon through the atonement. This is the day to celebrate the public honors of Zion's King: let every saint be glad. Here, as at the foot of the cross, let us swear eternal fealty to him.

But of the many who are not here, our anxious hearts inquire, And where are they? We look round for them and they are missing at the feast. And why did they not come? Do they not need a Saviour as much as we? Have they no souls?—Are they not to live beyond the grave? Will they be absent when the table of Christ is spread in his kingdom, and their parents and children are sitting around it? O my friends, where are you when your flesh and blood are setting out for heaven? The manna is heaped up at your door, and why are you perishing with hunger? A voice sounds from the sacred elements. The bread calls you to come. The wine cries as though it were the blood of Christ. The table of the Lord pleads, Ho every one that thirsteth come. Heaven and earth invite you. The Church of God reaches out a mother's arms to embrace the long lost children of her pray-

ers. Give joy to the Church of Christ. Give joy to angels. Give joy to your sainted parents who may now be hovering over this scene. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come.—And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Amen.

SERMON XXVI.

THE HEART OF GOD AFFECTED BY PRAYER.

GEN. XXXII. 28.

And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.

Jacob, having taken certain extraordinary measures to wrest the birthright and blessing from Esau, was compelled by his brother's hate to flee to Padanaram. In this country, which lay to the east of Euphrates, lived Laban, the brother of Jacob's mother. The wanderer took up his abode with his uncle, married his two daughters, and by them had a numerous offspring. After the lapse of twenty years God commanded him to return to his father, and renewed the promise of his protection. Jacob set out on his return, crossed Euphrates and came to Mahanaim, a place on the east of Jordan, which afterwards belonged to the tribe of Gad. From this place, or about this time, he sent messengers before him to Mount Seir, (a country on the south

of Canaan, in which Esau had settled,) to make his peace with his brother. The messengers returned with the account that Esau was on his way with four hundred armed men. Jacob had now crossed the river Jabbok and had proceeded on his way as far as Jordan. At this intelligence he was greatly alarmed. For notwithstanding the general promises of God, he knew not what particular trials might await him. Though his own life was safe, he knew not how many of his children were doomed to bleed on his brother's sword. It was a trying moment. Something more was to be done than to sit still and pray. Notwithstanding all the promises and all his trust in God, he knew that means must be used for the preservation of his family: and the means which he adopted discovered a remarkable sagacity and knowledge of the human heart. He set apart five droves of cattle as a present, which he sent across Jordan to meet his brother. He separated the cattle into different droves, and sent one drove after another, with suitable distances between; wisely foreseeing that, coming in this order, they would make a deeper impression on his brother than though they had all met him at once.

In the mean time he decamps in the night and carries back his family several miles up Jabbok, to the ford of the river. There he crosses it and leaves his family on the north side, in a place of as great safety as he could find. This done, he recrosses the ford, takes his station between his family and the approaching enemy,—on a spot of ground which from the vision of that night was af-

terwards called Penuel,—and then casts himself on God.

This was indeed a solemn and most trying hour. It was the dead of night. Universal stillness reigned. His sleepless family lay trembling on the other side of Jabbok. His brother was hastening forward, with forced marches and implacable resentments, to slay "the mother with the children." To flee, thus encumbered with women and children, was impossible. To attempt resistance against so great a force, would be in vain. What *can* screen him from a brother's fury? He has exhausted all the means in his power. He can do no more.—What hopes then remain but those which rely on heaven? To heaven he turned his eyes. Soon a bright form appeared before him. It was the same that had appeared to him at Bethel; the same Person, and perhaps the same figure, that afterwards hung on Calvary.

By miraculous light he was emboldened to embrace him and to press him importunately for a blessing. The heavenly form put on the appearance of resistance, as though he would tear himself away. How *could* he be spared? What *could* the patriarch do alone in that trembling crisis? Methinks I hear the cries of the affrighted children from the other side, and the fierce tread of hostile feet before. He *could not* let him go. He was emboldened, (surprising confidence!) to hold the vision fast. O did he know what he had in his embrace? It was nothing less than the treasure of the universe.

How *could* he let him go? Who would not give his life for such another embrace?

This surprising struggle, which was designed to bring out God's condescension to be wrestled with in prayer, and the confidence and efficacy of faith, continued "until the breaking of the day." Then said the Angel of the covenant "Let me go for the day breaketh. And he said, *I will not* let thee go except thou bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.—And he blessed him there."

Having thus prevailed with God, and obtained power to prevail with men, that is, with Esau and his host, his heart was at rest.

The sun arose as he passed over to his family. He had not been there long before, across the plain, he discovered his brother, approaching. He had just time to dispose his family in the order in which he wished them to approach;—the two handmaids with their children first, Leah with her children next, and the beloved Rachel with her Joseph in the rear; in order that the most beloved might be the least exposed in case of attack, or in case of peace that the most beautiful, by coming last, might complete the agreeable impression. With all his confidence in God he still adhered to means.

Before the whole Jacob himself passed over, to receive the blessing on the very spot where he had wrestled with the Angel. "And," (still using means,)

"he—bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him; and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him; and they wept." Behold the blessed effects of trusting in God and committing one's self to him in prayer when all other helpers fail. On the same spot that had been sanctified by his prayers, he received this great deliverance. The same clod that had been just wet with praying tears, was now sprinkled with the tears of brotherly affection.—Who will ever again distrust the faithfulness or resources of that God who could thus extract its venom from the scorpion's sting and soften an Esau into a brother. Penuel is the place where all should seek relief, as they have occasion, from the dangers and trials of life.

"Thy name shall be called—Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men." The very name of Israel signifies one who prevails with God: and the application of this name to the whole Church is a standing memorial of their potency in prayer. Great is Israel's weight and prevalence in heaven. And they will prevail with men; will prevail over all their enemies,—over all the profane Esaus who throw away their own birthright and then follow their "brother with the sword." Yes, great is Israel's weight and prevalence in heaven. And so long as they retain this name, their influence will never cease. It is a mark put upon them to betoken that they are invincible, (I had almost said, almighty,) in prayer. For by prayer they take hold of almighty strength and appropriate it to their benefit.

My object in this sermon is to show that by prayer believers really affect the heart of God.

It seems to be too common an opinion that God acts from the dictates of wisdom without feeling, or at least that he has no feelings for individuals, but only a benevolence for the universe at large. But how can he love the whole and not the parts? It is sometimes said that prayer is designed merely to fit men for blessings, not to influence God. If by fitting men for blessings is meant that it awakens in them those feelings which please and affect the mind of God, and render him unwilling to deny their requests, then prayer truly fits them for the blessings. But what will you say when prayer brings down blessings on others who never prayed, and who live in distant quarters of the globe. The good bestowed in such a case is no personal benefit to the prayerful. It is objected that God *causes* the exercises which are put forth in prayer, and that he cannot be affected by what he himself produces. But he created men and angels, who are none the less the objects of his love on that account. Will the objector say that God has no delight in the holiness of creatures because he himself has caused it? And if he can love the creatures which he has made and the holiness which he has caused, why can he not be affected by the prayers which he has excited? Every man has an individuation of existence as distinct from God as from Gabriel, and has a consciousness of pleasure as distinct from that which is attached to the divine mind as it is from the happiness of Paul. Our persons, our charac-

ter, our desires, our happiness, are all as interesting to God as though he had not created or sanctified us,—as though we were self existent.

The Scriptures speak of God as though he was really affected by prayer,—as though, from infinite and direct tenderness towards his children individually, he could not deny their requests, except so far as their good and the public interest require it. Are these representations merely after the manner of men, as we speak of his eyes and hands and feet, or do they hold forth literal and exact realities?

One thing is certain: the experience of creatures can never prove that these representations are not literally true. The *conduct* of God will always correspond with that of a parent who is actually prevailed upon by the entreaties of his children. They go to him, ask, and receive; receive what they would not have had if they had not asked for it. They who bear the name of Israel have the same power to prevail with God that Jacob had at Penuel. The Angel of the covenant acted as though he *could not* break away from the eager patriarch. The effect was the same as though he could not. So it is with the struggle of other saints. How often is the appearance strongly held out that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Zion in prayer appears absolutely invincible. By prayer she slew a hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's army at a stroke. By prayer she destroyed the immense army of Moab in the days of Jehoshaphat. By prayer she slew a hundred and

twenty thousand of the Midianites, while Gideon and the three hundred men with him only blew their trumpets and broke their pitchers and stood still in their place. By prayer she overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. By prayer she vanquished the Amalekites at Rephiddim. By prayer she demolished the walls of Jericho. And the time would fail me to tell of the overthrow of the Canaanites, the Philistines, Edom, Ammon, and Syria, and all the conquests which prayer has made. When prayer has put her hand to the sword, "one" has chased "a thousand, and two" have "put ten thousand to flight." Thus have Israel power to prevail with men. And the history of the Church proves that they have power to prevail with God.

What power had Abraham to prevail with God, when by successive entreaties he obtained his promise to spare the wicked Sodom if there were in it fifty righteous men,—if forty-five,—if forty,—if thirty,—if twenty,—and even if ten. In repeated instances, when the patience of God seemed exhausted by the rebellions in the wilderness, Moses prevailed with him to reverse the exterminating sentence. Joshua prevailed with God to cause the sun and moon to stand still. Gideon prevailed with him to confirm his faith by the fleece and the dew, and to vary the sign at his solicitation. Hannah prevailed with him to give the long desired son to her maternal arms. Samuel prevailed with him to rock the pole with thunders and to deluge the earth with rain, as a reproving sign to the rebellious Hebrews. Elijah by his prayers stopped the windows

of heaven, that "it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months." Again he prayed, "and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth her fruit." Hezekiah prevailed on God to reverse the sentence of death which had gone out against him, and for a confirming sign to carry back the shadow of the sun ten degrees. By prayer Daniel obtained secrets from God which no other man could discover, stopped the mouths of lions, and brought down angels to unfold the counsels of heaven. The three children prevailed on God to quench the rage of the seven times heated furnace. Esther and the Jews prevailed on him to blunt all the bolts of Persian thunder, and to raise his people to triumph from the very gates of death. While the disciples were assembled to pray for the imprisoned Peter, the angel of the Lord entered his prison, smote off his chains, and brought him out. Paul and Silas by their prayers raised an earthquake which burst open all the prison doors, and shook off all their bands, and brought the jailer to the foot of the cross. When the apostles and their "company" were praying about the persecuting priests and elders, "the place was shaken,—and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell" of the millions who through prayer "subdued kingdoms,—obtained promises,—escaped the edge of the sword,—waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

It was because they bore the name of Israel and as a prince had power to prevail with God. And

all who bear this name are addressed by God in this wonderful language, "Command ye me."

We must therefore conclude that God is as really affected by the supplications of his children as any earthly parent is. Indeed he says this in so many words. "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish will he—give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him."—Do you who are parents feel that you cannot deny your children any thing which they discreetly ask and which you are able to bestow? The same feelings has God. "I say *discreetly* ask; for they sometimes make indiscreet requests for things that would injure them; in which case, however disposed to indulgence, you do not yield to their solicitations. So it is with God. He does not grant his people what would injure them or mar the public good; but he will grant them something better. When Paul thrice prayed for the removal of the thorn in his flesh, he was not answered in exact form, but in the bestowment of greater good. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The grand objection to the theory that God is really affected by prayer, arises from an apprehension that this would militate against his unchange-

ableness. I therefore say, that he has none of the fickleness and weakness of earthly parents when they are moved by the entreaties of their children. Their emotions are new and temporary, and often partial and unwise. Under the temporary excitement they are hurried into feelings and actions which are injurious to their children and unjust to others. Not so with God. Why, I ask, should it be more inconsistent with his immutability to be affected by the prayers of his children, than to feel compassion for their sufferings, or complacency in their holiness, or benevolence for their persons and desires for their happiness? All these feelings must be new and imply change unless they have existed in one eternal now. And if without change he can feel this compassion and complacency and benevolence towards his children, why, without change, can he not be affected by their prayers?

The grand truth is, that God's existence is not in succession, but in one eternal now. To suppose otherwise would impute to him imperfection, and deny his immutability, omniscience, and infinity. If he exists in succession he is constantly receiving new ideas; and then there is a change of thought, which must lead to a change of counsel. If he is eternally receiving new ideas, he is not in possession of all ideas at once, and therefore is not omniscient. If new ideas are constantly coming into his mind, either the old ones are crowded out and forgotten, or he must grow in knowledge. On either supposition he is not infinite.

We cannot avoid the conclusion then that God's

existence is not in succession but in one eternal now. Whatever feelings therefore he has, he had from eternity. Whatever objects are now present to his mind, were always present. With him there is nothing new. His children were individually before him from eternity, and his heart was always affected with benevolence towards them, with love for their holiness and compassion for their sufferings; and with equal certainty it was always affected by their prayers. He eternally and unchangeably beheld them before him, eternally and unchangeably heard their prayers, and eternally and unchangeably felt those yearnings of tenderness which could not deny their consistent requests.—Prayer can have the same influence with him as though he had not what creatures call *fore*knowledge and *fore*determination,—as though he never existed till to-day. We may go to him with as much confidence as we would go to an earthly parent, who could be not only impressed but changed by our entreaties.

What a glorious circumstance it is that there is such a God,—enthroned in infinite majesty, yet from the midst of whose radiant glories divine compassion looks out as from a thousand eyes, and melts with pity for a dying world,—with more than a father's tenderness for his children. O such a God! Who can stifle the bursting praise? Who can hold their tongue from running loose in anthems of thanksgiving? Infinite ocean of love! real, unbounded love! let us love and adore and delight in thee as we may, as we ought, as we must.

We see then with what spirit and expectations we ought to pray;—not with a view to change God, but to become such objects as he eternally and unchangeably loved, and to present such petitions as he eternally and unchangeably felt unable to deny.

Still our prayers must be made with entire submission. No condescending language of God as if subjecting himself to our dictation,—no consciousness of power to influence him,—should make us forget that he has a sovereign right to do with us as seemeth good in his sight. Even his best beloved Son must say, "Not my will but thine be done."

We cannot but exclaim with admiration and transport, what a glorious privilege is prayer.—How unspeakable the privilege of approaching that heart which is full of tendernesses like these, and of gaining over that power which "openeth and no man shutteth," which "shutteth and no man openeth."

With all the energy of wrestling Jacob let us embrace and hold fast a prayer-hearing God. Had we the patriarch's strength of faith, our prayers would not be so languid and unavailing; nor should we so irresolutely give over the struggle when God for a moment seems to reject our petitions,—an appearance which he sometimes puts on on purpose to try the strength of our faith and desire? Had Jacob been thus irresolute, he would have missed the blessing on the banks of Jabbok and his name would never have been called Israel. What powerful motives rush upon us to "pray without ceas-

ing." What motives to *union* in prayer. If Jacob *alone* was so invincible, how great might be the united strength of praying thousands. Ere God "shall appear in his glory" to "build up Zion," there must be many wrestling Jacobs. The inscription is written on the broad side of heaven, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them."

Let the subject come down with the weight of a thousand thunders upon the prayerless. Do they know the incalculable loss they sustain by neglecting prayer? Worlds could not countervail the damage. And do they weigh the infinite guilt incurred by refusing the tendered compassions of a God? Heaven itself cries aloud, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." Have you determined to reject his love and the immortal happiness which is opening upon you, and to defy his resentments, to breast his power, and to lie down in everlasting burnings? If so, then proceed and put your dreadful resolution to the test. But O that it may waver; O that it may change. O that Gabriel and Paul and all the saints above may strike a higher note as they see you on your faces, as they hear you cry with bursting tears, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Amen.

SERMON XXVII.

JEHOVAH-JIREH.

GEN. XXII. 14.

And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh

The father of the faithful, in obedience to the divine command, had separated himself from all his kindred and removed into a land of strangers. For a long time he had but one intimate friend to sooth his solitary hours. The happiness of being a parent was denied him until he had worn out a hundred years. Imagine then his joy when the little Isaac was given him, with a promise that from this child the Messiah should proceed. For full twenty years the eyes and hearts of the fond parents were fixed on this precious gift of heaven, and with tearful tenderness watched his opening virtues. One day Abraham hears the well known voice of his heavenly Father. Expecting some fresh expression of paternal love, or perhaps some new bene-

diction on his beloved Isaac, he readily answers, Here am I. But conceive his astonishment when the dreadful command proceeded; "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of." Must then all his earthly comforts be dashed at once? In spite of the yearnings of a father's heart, must he imbrue his hands in the blood of his own son? How can he endure the ravings of the distracted mother? And how then can the Messiah be born? But none of these things move him. Without hesitation or delay he sets off for the place, concealing the big cares in his own breast. For more than sixty miles he carried his unwavering purpose, until he came to the spot where the temple was afterwards built and near which Mount Calvary stood. While on his way all the father was awakened in his heart by this moving question from Isaac; "My father, behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" But he suppressed the rising tumult and went forward to the place. Here he built an altar, and bound Isaac, and laid him upon the altar, and took the knife to open the palpitating heart. His arm was stretched out to give the fatal thrust, when the angel of the Lord called suddenly to him out of heaven and stopped the father's hand. And Abraham lifted up his eyes and beheld a ram caught in a thicket by his horns, which God had sent as a substitute for Isaac. At this he could no longer refrain, but broke forth into thanksgiving

and called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh, which signifies, The Lord will provide. He wished never to forget this great deliverance. He knew he never should forget it, and he wished the whole world might remember it too. He named the place *The Lord will provide*, that it might be a standing monument to all generations that God, not only would provide a Saviour for his people, but would often deliver them from straits and difficulties the most pressing and seemingly unavoidable. From these words I deduce the following Doctrine: *The Lord will provide all needful relief for his people, and will often bring them sudden and unexpected deliverance from straits the most perplexing.*

Let us range the ages for proofs of this. At the moment when our first parents, all dissolved in contrite grief, were bending over a ruined world, with nothing in prospect but the blackness of darkness forever, the joyful news came, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. That spot in Eden might well have been called Jehovah-Jireh. In subsequent years, when the Church, reduced to a single family, was on the point of being buried under the corruptions of an unbelieving world, God saved it by a flood: and while the wicked lay buried under the waters of the deluge, the Church rode the unruffled wave, and sung from the top of Ararat, *The Lord will provide.* At a later period, when the Church was in danger of being lost in a second general apostacy, God separated Abraham from the rest of the world to be the father of the holy seed. When the destruction of

Sodom was determined on, and the fiery storm was gathering over the vale of Siddim, messengers from heaven were sent to bring out Lot: and when he entered the protecting Zoar, he might well have sung, so loud that all heaven would have heard, *The Lord will provide.* When Esau came against his brother with an armed host, Jacob, encumbered with his wives and children, could neither flee nor resist. In that extremity he applied to the God who had been a shield to his father Abraham, and found such a deliverance as affects his heart to this day. The plain of Penuel, which was wet with the tears of relenting Esau instead of Jacob's blood, might have been inscribed all over with *Jehovah-Jireh.* When Joseph was cast into the cave, with no hand to deliver, no heart to pity, no tongue to plead for him, what relief could he expect? Yet the Lord did provide. And when he was cast into prison, with no witness to repel the foul charge, an obscure, unbefriended youth, in a strange land, in a dismal dungeon, crushed under the arm of power, what possible way could be seen for his escape? Yet by a wonderful interposition he was taken from the dungeon to be the lord of Egypt.

When the most powerful monarch on earth, bent on retaining Israel in bondage, commanded the midwives to destroy all the male children, by this very means God introduced an infant into Pharaoh's court, to be there trained up to deliver his people and to illumine the world with the records of salvation. When Israel lay bleeding and bound under the oppressive power of Egypt, with no armies to

assert their rights, and no ally this side of heaven, God found out a way to break their chains and to bring them out. And when the armies of Egypt pursued and overtook them by the Red Sea, there seemed no possible way of escape. The sea before, the enemy behind, impassable mountains on either side, and no weapons in their hands. In that moment of distress the cloud in which Jehovah dwelt, rolled between the two armies, filling the enemy's camp with darkness, while the sea opened a passage for his people to the other shore. There they sat and sung, as with an angel's voice, *The Lord will provide.*

Jehovah-Jireh may be set for the subject of almost every chapter in the book of Judges. The deliverance of Israel from the eight years' oppression of the king of Mesopotamia, by the hand of Othniel; and from the eighteen years of Moabitish oppression, by the hand of Ehud; and from the twenty years' domination of the potent Jabin, by Deborah and Barak; and from the seven years' ravages of the Midianites, by the hand of Gideon; and from the twenty years' tyranny of the Ammonites, by the hand of Jephthah; and from the long oppression of the Philistines, by the hand of Sampson; all proclaimed, in language not to be misunderstood, *The Lord will provide.*

When the Philistines fell upon the Hebrews as they were praying at Mizpeh, God wrought a great deliverance for his people; at which Samuel was deeply affected, and erected a monument and call-

ed it Ebenezer, saying "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." O how many Jehovah-Jirehs and Ebenezers may be found in the history of the Church. How many may be traced in the history of David. Often was he reduced to the greatest straits under the persecutions of Saul, and sometimes there appeared but a step between him and death; yet God delivered him. Sometimes Saul, with his men, came to the mouth of the cave where he lay concealed; and once they went in and lodged in the cave where he was; but God hid his servant. At one time the army of Saul had surrounded the fugitive, and were on the point of seizing their prey, when a horseman arrived in full foam, crying, "Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land:" and so the bird once more escaped from the fowler. In subsequent years, when Absalom and most of the kingdom had risen against him; when he was driven out with a little band and pursued by the thousands of Israel; nothing but inevitable destruction appeared before him: yet by a sudden change of circumstances the rebels were scattered, and in a short time the tribes were contending for the honor of bringing the king back.

Before Saul came to the throne, the Philistines had reduced Israel almost to a state of slavery.—God began their deliverance by the surprising victory granted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer over a whole Philistine garrison. He carried forward the work on that memorable day when a stripling, with a sling and a stone, prevailed over the mighty

Goliath, in the name of the God of the armies of Israel. And in the reign of that same confiding youth, he put down every enemy of his people.

In the days of Asa, a million of Ethiopians invaded the land; but in answer to prayer God gave a little band a glorious victory over them all. In the days of Jehoshaphat, three nations burst into Judea; but the people of God prayed, and all those thousands fell upon their own swords. When Sannacherib, after subduing the greater part of Judea, laid siege to Jerusalem, Hezekiah and Isaiah betook themselves to prayer, on the very mount where Isaac was delivered; and God sent his angel, who destroyed in one night a hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians.

By the wonderful deliverance wrought for the three children in the furnace of Babylon, and for Daniel in the lion's den, God showed that he was determined to protect his children let their enemies do their worst; that if this could be accomplished and nature hold its course, well; but if not, that fire should become tame and lions lambs when the safety of his children required it.

When Jerusalem and the temple lay in ashes, and the whole nation were scattered in the countries of the east, what mortal eye could see a way to restore the Church and to reorganize the state? Yet God, by transferring the empire to the Persians, and by influencing the minds of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, found out a way; and Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah successively sung, *The Lord will provide.* When Haman had enlisted all the power of

the Persian empire against the Jews, and by a decree which Ahasuerus himself could not reverse, had fixed the day for the utter destruction of the Church, no human wisdom could conceive a way to ward off the blow. A gallows is erected for the execution of the only man whose instrumentality can save the Church. The next morning he is to die. But mark the providence of God. That night the king could not sleep. A strange anxiety banished his slumbers. He tossed upon a restless bed. Nothing will do but he must arise and examine the records of the kingdom; and there he finds it written that Mordecai has saved his life. Early in the morning Haman comes into the court to obtain sentence against Mordecai. The king commands him —to do what? to conduct the noble Jew in triumph through the streets of the city. That day Haman hangs on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai, and Mordecai succeeds to Haman's honors. And thus the Church is suddenly snatched from a ruin which appears instant and inevitable. When Antiochus had partly burnt and demolished Jerusalem, and had driven all the Jews from the city, and consecrated the temple to a heathen idol, and decreed the utter annihilation of the true religion, and had put to torture and death as many as he could seize that would not renounce their God, and had burnt all the copies of the law that he could find; then it seemed as if the Church would be exterminated at once; yet in a short time, by the instrumentality of the Maccabeean brethren, she arose to independence and power.

When the Church lay buried under the rubbish of self-righteousness and hypocrisy, and the dogmas of the Pharisees had usurped the place of the Holy Scriptures, and the religion of heaven seemed on the point of leaving the world, the Son of God appeared on earth to set up a new dispensation and to transfer his kingdom from the Jews to the Gentiles. When Herod had cast Peter into prison and loaded him with irons, and stationed a guard to keep him, intending the next day to put him to death; that night the angel of the Lord struck off his chains and brought him out. When Paul and Silas had been publicly beaten at Philippi, and cast into the inner prison, and loaded with irons, at midnight, while they were singing praise to God, an earthquake burst open the prison and loosed their chains; and in the morning the magistrates were courteously entreating them to depart. When the enraged Jews had seized Paul in the inner court of the temple and dragged him into the court of the Gentiles, crying out, "Away with such a fellow from the earth;" God interposed, and sent Lysias, who commanded the castle of Antonia that stood upon the walls, to rescue him. Two days after, when forty men had bound themselves by a curse not to eat or drink till they had slain Paul, and lay in wait in the outer court to assassinate him as he should be brought from the castle to the temple to appear before the sanhedrim; the plot was discovered, and Lysias sent him off by night to Cesarea.

Numberless interpositions of a similar nature occurred during the persecutions of pagan and papal

Rome. Indeed the continued existence of the little tempest-beaten Church through so many storms, is a continued miracle, declaring to all the world that the Lord will provide. Before the Reformation by Luther, the Church was as deeply covered with ignorance and hypocrisy, and as much warped by the traditions of men, as before the advent of Christ. And who would have thought that an obscure monk, with all the thunders of the Vatican pointed at his heart, could have effected so extensive a reformation in the Christian world? The voice of ancient prophecy announced that before the millennium the Church will witness the greatest distress ever known on earth, and that in the most trying moment God will appear for her salvation. And at the close of the millennium, when Gog and Magog shall have encompassed the holy city, just about to seize the trembling prey; when they shall be scaling the walls and just ready to leap into the city, the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven. And then his people shall be taken up to meet their Lord in the air, while their persecutors shall be petrified with horror to see the banners of Immanuel displayed in the troubled skies. Then will *Jehovah-Jireh* be the general song. Then should Abraham pass through the blessed assembly and ask his children one by one, whether he falsely encouraged their hopes when on Moriah he declared that God would provide, they would all with glowing lips deny, and testify to the faithfulness of God.

And now, my dear brethren, permit me to call for your testimony. Have you never been shut up

in distressing straits, and seen no way of escape, and in your perplexity cried to the Lord, and found sudden and surprising deliverance? Have you never been bowed down under a view of your guilt and the strength of your corruptions, or been terrified with strong temptations, and while sinking in deep waters, cried like Peter, "Lord, save me or I perish," and found an arm extended for your relief? Cast down under spiritual darkness, have you never searched in vain for a Saviour on the right hand and on the left, and almost despaired of ever seeing his face again, and in your anguish looked away to Calvary, and heard him say, "Why weepest thou? Let me wipe the tears from thy cheek and lay thee upon my heart." Do you not remenber how your released soul could sit all day and sing, "Thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversity;—thou hast set my feet in a large room?" Before you ever saw the light of life, when you were sinking in the horrible pit, and nothing appeared but perpetual darkness, you suddenly found yourselves snatched from death, as Isaac was on Moriah, and arising from your despair, could have called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh.

And have you never been crushed under the pressure of *outward* affliction, and in your extremity sent your cries to Him who appeared on Moriah, and found deliverance as sweet as unexpected. Perhaps you have been brought to the brink of death, or have seen some dear friend struggling in the crisis of a fever; and when all hope had vanish-

ed, have been suddenly and delightfully relieved by Abraham's God. Perhaps you have been cast into perplexing circumstances, and seriously apprehended the loss of property or character, or at best to be harassed by a long train of cares; when all at once you have found the cloud dispersed, and with all your heart have subscribed to the old Abrahamic creed, *The Lord will provide.* Sometimes perhaps you have been over anxious about your future support, and distrusted the providence of God; when, to shame your unbelief, he has suddenly supplied all your wants in a manner wholly unthought of. Perhaps some of you have been in real want, and have seen nothing before you but poverty and distress; when He who supplied his suffering people with manna, and hears the young ravens when they cry, brought relief in a manner which filled you with gratitude and wonder.

God frequently brings his people into straits on purpose to show them what is in their hearts and to teach them their dependance, and to manifest his faithfulness by coming to their relief. He suffers them to look perplexing circumstances in the face, that they may feel the value of that love which delivers from them all.

But let it never be forgotten that this relief is to be expected only when they practise the two great duties of obedience and trust. Abraham found this deliverance while resolutely obeying God and trusting in him to fulfil his promise respecting Isaac. Not looking at the darkness of the prospect, but leaving the ways and means to a faithful God, he

proceeded in the course of duty: and while doing this, he not only was relieved from his trial, but received a new charter of all the blessings before promised. While Christians neglect their duty, or while, with eyes intent on difficulties, they trouble themselves about the ways and means by which the promises are to be fulfilled, they will meet with nothing but perplexity. But if they will confide in God, and if need be, "hope against hope," and firmly pursue the prescribed course whatever darkness may hang around it, they shall find what a faithful God can do.

And now, my dear brethren, let us lose ourselves in delightful reflections on the faithfulness of God. How was Abraham affected with this attribute on Moriah. "O," says he, "I never shall forget this scene to eternity; and let all who in future ages are tempted to distrust God, come up to this mount and never doubt again. Let a wondering world turn their eyes this way and forever record the faithfulness of Jehovah." What a solid ground did God then appear on which to build everlasting confidence.

Our subject encourages us to place unwavering confidence in God in the darkest times. What evils can to us appear more unavoidable, than to Abraham appeared the death of his son? Yet God did provide. Though we should be so shut up as to see no way of escape, let us not despond. The darker the prospect the more opportunity for faith to act and to acquire vigour by exercise. Let it not be weakened by the very means intended for its invigoration.

Ah how does the faith of Abraham and other ancient saints shame our unbelief. When did relief ever appear to us less probable than it did to them? And if they could hope against hope, under what possible circumstances can we justify our distrusts of God? He who relieved Abraham on Moriah, what can he not do?

Finally, what strong inducements have we to choose such a God for our friend and protector in such a world as this. Had there been no being in heaven to feel for Abraham, what could he have done in that distressing hour? It is an unspeakable privilege to enjoy the friendship of such a God while passing through this vale of tears: and they who are wise will not venture further into life without securing this boon. There is no other protection against the ills of life. "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." Great is their safety and peace who confide in God; but disappointment, perplexity, and ruin await those who reject this offered shield. O make the Lord your trust. Put yourselves under the protection of his throne: then rise earth, rise hell. Give me a wilderness, without a shred of animal comfort: if I have him I possess all. Take his presence away, and heaven itself is a dungeon. "Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." Amen.

SERMON XXIX.

ALL THESE THINGS ARE AGAINST ME.

GEN. XLII. 36.

And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

When we read the lives of the patriarchs and contemplate only their communion with God, we are ready to think of them as exempted from the ordinary cares and trials of life; and conclude it impossible for them, with such evidence of the divine favor and such a prospect of immortal glory, to have been much affected with the events of this transitory state. Indeed it *is* strange that a good man, walking on the verge of eternity, with everlasting blessedness in his eye, should be deeply affected with any calamity. But when we take a nearer view of the patriarchs, we find them men of like passions with ourselves, and familiarly ac-

quainted with the common cares and sorrows of life.

Abraham passed many lonely years upon earth after he had lost the wife of his youth; and he felt all the sorrows of bereavement which a good man would feel now. Isaac had to witness a deadly animosity between his two sons, and saw one of them compelled to flee and become an exile, for twenty years, in a foreign land. Jacob passed through a long succession of trials. In addition to a brother's hate and his own protracted exile, he experienced many cares and hardships in Padanaram. Upon his return to the land of his fathers, he and his family were on the point of perishing by his brother's sword. He had the grief to bury his beloved Rachel as well as Leah. Rachel left two children, on whom the patriarch doted with most impassioned fondness. His grief for the death of Rachel had scarcely time to abate, before the eldest of her sons was seized by his brethren and cruelly sold into Egypt. His coat, rent in pieces and stained with blood, was brought to the patriarch to persuade him that a wild beast had devoured his Joseph; and the heart-broken father exclaimed, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." In process of time a grievous famine compelled him to send his sons into Egypt to buy corn. They returned with the dreadful tidings, that the lord of Egypt, under the suspicion that they were spies, had cast Simeon into prison, and had sworn by the life of Pharaoh that they should see his own face no more unless they brought their brother Ben-

jamin down. How could the aged father part with the last of Rachel's sons, the brother of his lost Joseph?—to put him under the power of a man who had treated his other sons so roughly? But the famine pressed upon him; all the corn was spent; the whole household must perish, and Simeon must die in prison, unless Benjamin is soon delivered up. Under these circumstances his sons pressed their father to let Benjamin go. This drew from the afflicted patriarch the deep complaint of our text: "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." He said moreover, "Ye know that my wife bore me two sons. And the one went out from me and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since. And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

Under this severe conflict the good old patriarch felt like another man. Notwithstanding all the promises he had received from the God of Bethel, his heart sunk under the weight of this complicated distress; and in his infirmity he pronounced against himself and against the faithfulness of God, "All these things are against me." Alas the weakness of our poor fallen nature. How could any circumstance be against a good man to whom it was secured by covenant that all things should work together for his good? Poor man, how weak is thy faith. Is it so much against thee that Joseph is taken from thee to be the lord of Egypt and the

nourisher of thine old age? to prevent the extinction of the family from which the Messiah is to proceed? Is it so much against thee that Simeon is left in a brother's hands? Is it against thee that Benjamin is called away by the yearning bowels of the other son of Rachel? How limited is the poor man's vision. Could he only look beyond the cloud, he would see Joseph yet alive and disguised in glory. He would see Simeon under a brother's care, and Benjamin going to a brother's arms. He would see that parting scene,—that rending of his heart strings,—to be only a prelude to a more joyous meeting with his children. He would see the temporary loss of Joseph, the detention of Simeon, the call for Benjamin, to be only links in the chain leading to the salvation of his house, and to that succession of wonders which were to fill the world with the glory of God. Before he formed this hasty conclusion, he should have waited to see what the God of his fathers meant by these events. This would have been more dutiful to the Being who, when he wandered an exile from his father's house, had appeared to him at Bethel, and who, when father and mother forsook him, had kindly taken him up. It was but a few days and Benjamin returned with the transporting tidings that the other son of Rachel lived and was the lord of Egypt. Then it was that the patriarch was undeceived, and fainted under the mighty joy, and cried as he awoke "It is enough. Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." What a change is here. A few days ago and all these things were against

him; now "it is enough." The things which he pronounced against him, are turned to a fulness of joy. Who will ever again distrust the faithfulness of God? Jacob could remember this affecting interposition to the day of his death. It was in his mind when he pronounced his dying blessing on the sons of Joseph: "I had not thought to see thy face, and lo God hath showed me also thy seed. The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." And he might have added, in the spirit of David, Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles, hast quickened me again and hast brought me up again from the depths of the earth. Was it possible after this for Jacob ever to distrust God again? How great a happiness did he then view it that there was a God to take from him his Joseph and his Benjamin. What could have tempted him, on the day he went to Egypt, to transfer his interests to any other hands? How ashamed did he feel of his former despondency; and with what emotions, when he arrived at Beersheba, did he offer sacrifices on the ancient altar of his father Isaac.

My brethren, this is a specimen of the general providence of God towards his people, and of their proneness to draw hasty conclusions against the faithfulness of God under dark and mysterious dispensations.

In numberless instances the reason of man is incapable of judging what is for his good. With a ken limited to a narrow circle, he often thinks events against him which in their issue essentially contri-

bute to his happiness. It is difficult to determine from the events themselves, which are appointed in mercy and which in wrath. Many things which are pleasant to sense, like the quails in the wilderness, are sent in judgment; and many things which are very crossing to the flesh, are sent in mercy. The lapse of a few years may show, if not, the explanations of the final judgment *will* show, that many things on which we fondly doted, were but gilded snares, and that many things which caused our hearts to bleed, were appointed by a Father's love.

The impatience and unbelief of man tempt him to pronounce every thing against him which crosses his wishes and defeats his expectations: yet in many instances the gratification of his desires would have marred his peace, if not sealed his ruin.—When a dangerous instrument is wrested from the hands of a child, his frettings and cryings pronounce, All this is against me. But his more considerate parent has a different judgment. The youth, eager in the pursuit of pleasure, deems every bar to his gratification against him; yet his best interest and honor are involved in his defeat. The afflictions which beset his manhood, such as the disappointment of his ambition, the loss of property, health, or friends, are all too hastily pronounced to be against him; when perhaps by means of frustrated hopes and the refining furnace, his eager expectations from the creature are moderated, his pride reduced, and his soul prepared for happiness and for heaven.

In this vale of tears the hearts of men are often

rent by the temporary loss of friends, by their absence and supposed death, by their sickness or the suspension of their reason; and while they are mourning them as forever lost, and crying with disponding minds, "All these things are against me," they find them restored to them again, and discover that they lost them only to receive them back with greater joy. Because our Josephs and our Benjamins are idols, they are sometimes torn from our bleeding sides and deposited in the grave.—Perhaps the last hope of a family is removed. And when the pious parent, trembling with agony, sees his pious child committed to the earth, this heaving sigh bursts from his breaking heart, "All these things are against me." "I will go down into the grave unto my" child "mourning." In an unbelieving hour he views him forever lost; and oft-times in the dim hour of twilight visits his grave, to weep over all that is left of one so dear. But could the vail be drawn aside, he would see his Joseph yet alive and more than lord of Egypt. Soon the chariots of God, animated with spirit and full of eyes, will come to convey him to the arms of his Joseph. And when the dawn of heaven shall break upon his swimming eyes, and the chariots of God shall appear,—and he shall hear that his Joseph is yet alive, and that he is going to his child and to his God,—his soul, bending under the mighty joy, will cry, "It is enough."—"It is enough, it is enough," he will cry as he ascends in his chariot of fire. And when he falls into the arms of his child,—what was the meeting of Jacob and Joseph

to this? Joseph fell on his father's neck and wept on his neck a good while: and Jacob said unto Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive." But in that heavenly meeting there will be no tears,—no calculations for death,—but all will be rapture and endless life. "O my child, have I found thee at last? After all my solitary years, have I found thee at last? And shall we part no more?" This is far unlike the hour when I closed thine eyes. This is far unlike the tedious days that I have lived on earth without thee, and the gloomy hours of night in which I have visited thy grave and watered it with my tears. O blessed meeting, with greater glory than though we had never parted. I bless thee, O my Father, for taking away my idol. Forgive my rebellious sighs. Forgive the distrust which once said, "All these things are against me."

In the complicated government of a world, many things occur the connexion and tendency of which cannot be traced by any wisdom less than divine. Nothing but the discernment of that eye which looks through eternity, can discover what events will be ultimately beneficial to men. Under such a government it is reasonable to suppose that many things will occur for which human reason cannot account. Under many aspects of God's providence the most filial minds are filled with awe, and the wisest minds perceive that "clouds and darkness are round about him." But though clouds and darkness *are* round about him, yet behind that vail he works with an eye steadfastly fixed on the hap-

piness of his people. Inscrutable events, which are viewed by Christians as most against them, will prove to be links in the chain leading to their highest happiness. "All things" shall "work together for" their "good." "All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come, all are yours." As God is an infinitely tender Father, he has no interest distinct from that of his children. Nor has the Lord Jesus Christ any interest distinct from that of his disciples. If then God and his Son pursue their own interest, they will pursue that of the great family of the Church.

In the happy termination of the grievous afflictions of the patriarch, we see a delightful specimen of the result of all the dispensations of providence. How glorious did the providence of God appear to Jacob when he lay infolded in the arms of his Joseph. What a charming explanation was that of the mysterious dealings of his heavenly Father. We shall not all see such full explanations in this life, but we shall all see them. When the whole skein of providence is unfolded, all will appear as those mysterious events did to Jacob when he met with his long lost son. Love,—the love of God,—the love of Jesus, will appear to have animated the whole machine of government and to have moved every wheel. And ten thousand voices, which once pronounced, "All these things are against me," will shout and sing, Hosanna to him who made my tears to flow. Everlasting thanks to a Father's care for the furnace in which I was pu-

rified for glory. Alleluia. Blessing and honor and glory to him who made my tears to flow.

Have we not then, my brethren, abundant reason to rejoice in the government of such a God? What could we do without a God to shape the circumstances of our lives? He knows infinitely better how to plan for us than we for ourselves, even if we had power to execute. But we have no power. Were not the government of the world in his hands, nothing would take place in which a good man could rejoice; but now there is a sure pledge that all things will issue well. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof."

If there is such reason to rejoice in the government of God, surely we ought to *submit* to it with patience and cheerfulness under all possible trials. There are no afflictions but what are appointed by God. The nature of our trials, their magnitude, their duration, and all the attending circumstances, are regulated by infinite wisdom and love. To the disposal of our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, let us cheerfully submit. It is best that God should govern his own world according to his own pleasure. This can be no injury to us unless we are his incorrigible enemies: and if we are, we must be wretched whether he governs or not. If he governs, we must be crushed by the hand of his justice; and if his government were suspended, anarchy and ruin would overwhelm the whole creation. To the enemies of God the very smiles of nature are full of terrors, and every measure for

the display of his glory will fill them with eternal torment. But those who sumbit to his government not only perform a reasonable duty, but take the surest way to secure their own immortal happiness.

Will you barely submit? That is cold. *Commit* all your cares and interests and the keeping of your souls to God with unwavering trust and with ineffable delight. You had better never been born if you may not have God to reign over you and by well appointed trials to purify you for glory. Let us gather up everything dear to us on earth and commit them all to the hands of a faithful God. It is safe to leave them there. He never disappointed the well grounded confidence of one of his creatures. "He is able to keep that which" we "have committed unto him against that day." We cannot place too much confidence in him. By how many mercies and faithful interpositions has he supported his claim to our confidence. And shall we distrust him still? Shall we doubt his wisdom, his goodness, or his truth? "Trust ye in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee." Amen.

SERMON XXX.

HEAVEN.

HEB. XI. 10.

For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

This was the habit by which the patriarch Abraham sustained himself under the ills of life, while wandering a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. It was reasonable in him so to do. When men are about to remove into another country, they are eager to catch the reports of those who have visited it, and perchance to send beforehand to explore it. We hope by and by to go away to dwell in the heavens for the rest of our existence, and it is interesting to collect all the information we can respecting that country. It is interesting to see where our Christian friends have gone who have disappeared from our sight. If the Bible is not a fable and all the hopes of man a dream, they are yet alive, in another and a better state. Why should unbelief

put them out of existence? Cannot God uphold them in a state of pure spirits like his own? Could his benevolence be gratified by placing them here to groan and weep for a few days and then to be no more? If their present existence differs from our experience what then? Have we seen all the varieties of things even in this little world? To a mind that in thought has visited India and China and the islands of the southern sea, is it incredible that a state of things should exist widely different from our experience? And if our beloved friends *are* still alive and in that blessed state, how interesting to visit them there and see the home they have found.

There is no need that the inhabitants of earth should remain so little acquainted with heaven.—There is a ladder, such as Jacob saw, by which they may ascend and descend every hour. We ought daily in our thoughts to visit that delightful land and to make excursions through its glorious regions. The more we accustom ourselves to these flights the easier they will become. Why is it that we feel so little the impression of eternal glory, but because our thoughts are no more conversant with heaven? It is of the last importance that we should become more familiar with that blessed country. It would tend to wean us from this poor world, to support us under the trials of life and the delay of our hopes, to illumine us with the light of that land of vision, to transform us into the likeness of its blessed inhabitants, and to reconcile us to the self-denials and labors which we have here to endure

for Christ. It would tend to settle the great question of our qualifications for heaven. Could we gain distinct ideas of that blessed world, we might easily decide this point by ascertaining whether we could relish its sacred enjoyments, and whether this is the heaven we desire.

One reason that heaven makes so little impression upon us is that we contemplate it in generals, and of course confusedly. We must take it in detail. We must go through its golden streets, and traverse its flowery fields, and examine its objects one by one. Let us spend a few moments in attempting this, and for a season imagine ourselves there.

The reflection of least importance respecting that world is, that it is *a pleasant country*. In whatever part of the universe it is situated, there is a local heaven, where the body of Jesus is, where the bodies of Enoch, and Elijah, and those who arose with Christ are, and where the bodies of all the saints will be after the resurrection. Those bodies will be material, and of course will occupy space, and must have a local residence, as really as the bodies which are now on the earth. That country is already prepared, (it was "prepared from the foundation of the world,") and is unquestionably material. The idea that the saints will have no place to dwell in but the air, has no countenance in the word of God. Their city, in more senses than one, "hath foundations." It is a real country; and my first remark is, that it is a *pleasant* country. He that could make the scenes which we behold, can unite the most beautiful of them into

one and surpass them all. And there can be no doubt the place which he has chosen for the metropolis of his empire, and which Christ selected from all worlds for his residence and the residence of his Church must be the most beautiful of all the worlds that he has made. It is set forth in Scripture under images drawn from the most enchanting objects of sense. I know that these are intended to illustrate its *spiritual* glory, but can you prove that this is all? Why are spiritual things set forth by sensible objects? You say, because men are in the body. And pray, will they not eternally be in the body after the resurrection? And will not an *exhibition to the senses* of the riches of the divine nature, be as useful an auxiliary to other revelations then as now. Nor can we doubt that *unimbodied* spirits are capable of beholding and enjoying the material works of God. Otherwise the material universe would be a blank to the angels, and to human spirits before the resurrection.

We may then reasonably conclude that heaven is a world of more resplendent and varied beauty than mortal eye has ever seen.

The next circumstance to be mentioned respecting that world is, that it contains the most *delightful society*. The saints are forever delivered from the interruptions of the wicked, from the pollution of their society and the disgusting coarseness of their conversation; and are admitted to the most intimate friendship with the holy angels, and with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the whole assembly that have been collecting since the

death of Abel, including, in many instances, the most beloved friends they knew on earth. Parents will there meet their children, and husbands their wives, after a long and painful separation. Brothers and sisters will rush into each other's arms and exclaim, "Have I found you at last? This is far unlike the parting hour when I closed your eyes, and far unlike the solitary evenings in which I have visited your grave and wept over your dust."—Those blessed spirits will enjoy the most perfect friendship, with every distrust and rival interest banished; each loving the other as his own soul, and not a thought nor a joy but what is common. Their conversation will be high and satisfying, turning on the history of God's love and the wonders of his works; and the expressions of love to each other in their looks, deportment, and words, will be most tender and convincing.

The *employment* of heaven is delightful. The saints are delivered from all the cares and toils of this life, and have nothing to do but to serve and praise God, to go on his errands to different worlds, to study into the mysteries of his nature and the wonders of his works, and to converse with their brethren on these high and exhaustless themes.—Every faculty has attained its full employment; the understanding in grasping the great truths of God and expatiating among the glories of his nature; the memory in going over his past dispensations and collecting materials for an everlasting monument of praise; the heart in loving and thanking him; the will in choosing him and his service; the

eyes in beholding his glory; the hands and feet in doing his will; the tongue in high conversation and bursting songs.

In that world they have attained to the *perfection of all their powers;* not to that perfection which excludes progress, but to that which fits them for the highest action and enjoyment that their capacities admit. They are delivered from every clog to meditation, devotion, or service, arising from a weak or disorded body; from all the passions and prejudices which warped their judgment here; from all those indiscretions by which they feared they should injure the sacred cause they loved; and have attained to unerring wisdom. Their memories are strengthened to recall the leading actions of their lives and the principal dealings of God with them. They are freed from all languor and wanderings in duty, and can hold their attention perpetually fixed without weariness or satiety.

They have attained to the *perfection of knowledge;* not that perfection, I say again, which excludes progress, but that which prevents error. They have advanced greatly in the positive knowledge of all those things which a sanctified spirit desires to know. The feeblest infant that has gone to heaven, probably knows more of God than all the divines on earth. They see as they are seen and they know as they are known. Besides the light directly shed upon them, in the excursions which they make through the universe they have a glorious opportunity to study God in his works and dispensations.

They have escaped from all the *sufferings* of the present life; from sickness and pain and the mortification of being laid aside as useless; from want and the fear of want; and have attained to the perfect gratification of every taste and desire,—to the possession of all things. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." As heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, they own the sun, moon, and stars; they possess the eternal God.

They have escaped from all the degradation and scorn and slander which their poverty or their religion drew upon them here, and have reached the *highest honors of the sons of God.* They have been crowned, and have sat down with Christ on his throne, and with their golden harps and robes of light forever sing and forever shine.

They have escaped from all the "*vanity*" that was found in the creature, which left them unsatisfied, uneasy, and vexatiously disappointed; the vanity too which consisted in the transient nature of earthly things, and disturbed the short-lived enjoyment with the reflection that it would soon expire. From all this "vanity and vexation of spirit" they have escaped, and have found a good which fully satisfies and brings no sorrow with it,—no apprehension that it will ever end.

They are perfectly delivered from *sin*, that body

of death under which they groaned all their lives long. O how they used to look forward and pant after this deliverance. But now they have found it. Not a feeling that will ever offend their God again. And they have attained to perfect positive holiness. They love and thank and delight in God as much as they desire. They could not wish, with their present powers, to be more tender or grateful towards him. They could not wish to be more free from selfishness or anger or envy, nor, with their present powers, to be more benevolent or affectionate towards every creature of God.

They are forever delivered from *the buffetings of Satan.* The enemy that annoyed them so long is shut up in prison and can never approach them more. No longer can those temptations vex them which made them weary of life and pursued them into the grave.

Every *wall of separation* between them and God is taken down, every cloud which hid his face is dispersed, every frown smoothed into smiles.—They are admitted to the perfect vision and fruition of God and the Lamb. They see that God does not upbraid them for the past, that he has not one less tender feeling towards them for all their sins, and that he loves them with an affection infinitely surpassing that of the tenderest earthly parent.—They are conscious of an interchange of thoughts and feelings with him the most affectionate,—of a communion no less real than that which subsists between earthly friends. They possess greatly enlarged views of his perfections, particularly of his

unbounded love, and enjoy him to a degree of which we have here no conception. Their souls swell and expand with the mighty blessedness, and rise into raptures of wonder, love, and praise.

The principal medium through which they see and commune with God is the *Mediator*. It is from his face that the strongest emanations of Godhead shine. He is the sun which illumines the heavenly city. "The city," as John saw it, "had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb" was "the light thereof." It is through him chiefly that God speaks to the inhabitants of heaven, and through him as the representative of the Father they send up their thanks. They put them into his hands as the Deity expressed, much in the same way as they did in the days of his flesh. The incarnate God is constantly displayed in heaven on a resplendent throne, with much the same personal appearance, perhaps, that he had on Tabor and in Patmos. Though arrayed in glory that would overpower mortal vision, it is Jesus of Nazareth still;—the same body, the same features, the same scars in his hands and feet and side. O how do they feel as they behold him. When they look back to Calvary, and then down to hell, and then abroad over the heavenly plains, and down the slope of ages, and see from what he delivered them, and to what he raised them, and at what expense, with what unutterable gratitude do they cast their crowns at his feet, and say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." And then they take their harps and fill all

the arches of heaven with the song, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever."

All this glory and happiness will be *eternal*. On earth their enjoyment was damped by the thought that it would soon expire. Their dearest friends, their health, their life, were held by a very uncertain tenure. But now they have no fear of change. When they first opened their eyes in that world and found themselves entered on a blessedness which was sure and eternal, with what transport did they contemplate that single fact after all their doubts and fears. The thought that they are forever safe, that no changes can cast them down, has in it a weight and sublimity of blessedness which no imagination can conceive. They have leisure to ponder over these glorious thoughts. They may look forward to twenty, thirty, or forty years without thinking that age is coming on to cramp their powers and terminate their enjoyments. They may breathe the airs of paradise and inhale the delights of heaven for a thousand years, without losing the freshness of their youth or approaching any nearer to an end. They may measure over a million of ages of varied delights, and have as much before them as at the first. They may pass as many more millions of ages as there were dusts in the earth, and still they are as young as ever. From that distant period of eternity, when they look back to the few moments that they sojourned on earth,

how diminutive will this little space appear; how trifling its joys and sorrows; and how wonderful will it seem that they could be so interested in them.

They will eternally *grow* in capacity, knowledge, holiness, and happiness. This seems to be the natural progress of mind until it is checked by bodily decay. But when no such clog hangs upon the spirit, it will hold on in its course of advancement without end. As it grew in the vigor of its faculties from infancy to manhood, so it will expand in the regions of life to eternity: insomuch that the least soul will far outstrip the present dimensions of Gabriel; and holding on its way, will be to what the highest angel now is, as a giant to an infant; and still it has an endless progression before it,—rising higher and higher in intellectual sublimity, and forever approximating towards the infinite dimensions of God.

Its *knowledge* too will forever increase. Perpetually pondering on the wonders of God, studying him in his works, drawing lessons from all worlds among which it makes excursions, and diving deeper and deeper into the unfathomable wonders of redemption, it cannot fail to advance in knowledge without end. The time then must come when the least soul in heaven will know more than all the creation of God now do; and still it has just entered the heavenly school. Imagination cannot keep pace with its flight through the sublime heights of intellectual ascension. What amazing views of God and the Lamb, what amazing views of the mysteries of redemption, what amazing views of the

wonders of creation, of the purposes to be answered by the sufferings of the damned, of the boundless reach of mercy, of the whole history of God's administration in all worlds: and still to pursue the high and glorious study without end.

And in proportion to its advance in capacity and knowledge, must be its *holiness*. The more God is seen the more he will be loved and delighted in.—What new and unspeakable fervors of affection will be enkindled by those accessions of knowledge which will be hourly coming in. What a flame of love and gratitude will be acquired in the eternal progress of capacity and knowledge. The time will come when the least soul in heaven will contain more love nnd gratitude than the whole consistory of angels now do: and still to advance to higher and still higher fervors without end.

And in proportion to its advance in capacity, knowledge, and holiness, will be its *happiness*. If to know and love God in one degree makes a heaven, to know and love him in ten degrees will make a tenfold happiness. What unimagined bliss then must the holy soul find in rising up to views and fervors increasing as the ages of eternity go round. The time must come when the feeblest saint in heaven will enjoy more in one hour than all the creation of God have enjoyed to this day; and still he has just begun his eternal progress in blessedness. From those sublime heights of ecstacy he will ascend to heights still more sublime, reaching upwards continually and approximating forever towards the infinite happiness of the Eternal Mind.

And now behold that creature,—the feeblest that ever entered heaven; behold him at some imagined point in eternity, with all this increase of capacity, knowledge, holiness, and happiness; and how awfully great and glorious does he appear. As much above the heathen gods as the sun exceeds a glow-worm. Could that creature appear on earth he would be worshipped by half the nations. He would pour upon their sight a sublimity and glory a million times greater than they ever ascribed to God himself. And still that creature has just begun his eternal progress. What then will he become? The imagination of Gabriel faulters and turns back from the amazing pursuit.

Child of God, bow before thine own majesty.—Debase not thyself by sordid actions. Forget not the glories of thy nature, nor sell thine infinite birthright for such a contemptible mess of pottage as earth can yield. Child of God, cheer up under the trials of life. Let nothing cast you down who are standing on the verge of immortal glory. It is the only opportunity you will ever have to suffer for Christ. Eternity will be long enough for enjoyment. Your toils and self-denials will all be recompensed a thousand fold by that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Child of God, why are you cast down? I wonder you are not constantly transported. Our Saviour said to his disciples, "Rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you, but rejoice rather because your names are written in heaven." So say I to you. Rejoice not that your wealth is increased, that your

honors flow in upon every gale, that the laurels of science encircle your brow, that you have the sweetest and most affectionate friends; but rejoice rather that an immortality of glory is before you. Child of God, why are you growing to earth and sleeping out life in ungrateful inaction? What is the world to you who are so soon to be transported to the heaven of heavens? How will the world appear to you when it is melting down in the general conflagration? How will the world appear to you a million of ages after the judgment, while you are lost among the glories of heaven? And why this ungrateful *sloth?* Have you nothing to do for him who entailed this immortality upon you? Have you nothing to do for him who redeemed you from hell by his own blood, and has gone to prepare a place for you? Have you nothing to do for *him* on earth at whose feet you will presently lie in such unutterable transports of wonder and gratitude? Have you nothing to do for him on the very ground which was stained by his blood, and while breathing the air that was agitated by his sighs? Have you forgot that he left on earth a beloved Church, and that he has said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me?" Have you nothing to do for that Church on which his heart is so tenderly fixed? Have you nothing to do for *his* honor among men, who came out to seek you when you were wandering from the fold of God,—who separated you from your former companions and put a title to heaven in your hands? Ah Sirs, how will this

listlessness appear when you are enveloped in the glories of heaven and are filling the celestial arches with your bursting praise? Up, every redeemed soul, and do what you can for your God and Saviour. Take your harps from the willows and begin the raptured song. Let all the country around be charmed and won by your sacred melody. Go on your way enchanting the ear of a Christless age with your harp and your song; and when you come to the last enemy, enchant the ear of death itself with the same celestial notes; and let your praises die away from mortal ears, only to burst in new and louder tones on the ear of heaven. Amen and Amen.

SERMON XXXI.

NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH.

II. Pet. iii. 13.

Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

In the preceding verses the apostle had given a distinct and literal account of the dissolution of the earth and visible heavens by the final conflagration. He passes in our text from dissolving worlds and a smoking universe, to the new heavens and new earth which are to come in the place of the old; which are the object of the joyous expectation of good men; and which, (to wit, both the new heavens and new earth,) will be inhabited by righteousness, namely, by the same righteous *men* that so eagerly expect them. The Scriptures distinctly teach us that when Christ shall come to judgment, this earth, together with the visible heavens, including all the heavenly bodies that were made dur-

ing the six days of creation, will be dissolved by fire, will pass away, will perish, will have an end, will be no more. They also teach us that new heavens and a new earth, in a literal sense, will be formed to supply the place of those which shall have passed away; and, though the highest or third heaven will continue to be the principal abode of the saints, that both the new heavens and new earth will be inhabited by righteous men.

A question here arises, whether the new heavens and new earth will be created out of the ruins of the old; that is, whether the old will be renovated and restored in a more glorious form; or whether the old will be annihilated and the new made out of nothing. The idea of the annihilation of so many immense and glorious bodies, organized with inimitable skill and declarative of infinite wisdom, is gloomy and forbidding. Indeed it is scarcely credible that God should annihilate any of his works, much less, so many and so glorious works. It ought not to be believed without the most decisive proof. On the other hand, it is a most animating thought that this visible creation which sin has marred,—which the polluted breath of men and devils has defiled,—and which by sin will be reduced to utter ruin,—will be restored by our Jesus,—will arise from its ruins in tenfold splendor, and shine with more illustrious glory than before it was defaced by sin.

After a laborious and anxious search for light on this interesting subject, I must pronounce the latter to be my decided opinion. And the same, I find, has

been the more common opinion of the Christian fathers, of the divines of the Reformation, and of the critics and annotators who have since flourished. I could produce on this side a catalogue of names which would convince you that this has certainly been the common opinion of the Christian Church in every age, as it was also of the Jewish.

Some of the reasons which may be offered in favor of this opinion, are the following.

1. The words which are employed to express the destruction of the world, do not necessarily imply annihilation. The texts which speak of the removal and passing away of the world, do it in such terms as are often used to denote a mere transition from one place or state to another. The figures taken from the wearing out of a garment and from the vanishing of smoke, do neither of them import the destruction of substance. For the substance of a garment when it moulders away, and of smoke when it vanishes, is not annihilated; only the form is changed. Is it said that the world shall *perish?* The same word is used to express the ancient destruction of the world by the flood, when certainly it was not annihilated. Is it said that the world shall *have an end* and *be no more?* This may be understood only of the present form and organization of the visible system. When the present world shall be reduced to ashes, it may properly be said to end and to be no more. And when a new organized universe shall arise from the ashes of the old, it may be properly considered, not the same universe continued, but a new and different one. Is

it said that the heavens and the earth shall be dissolved by fire? We may safely believe that the fire will do all that the most intense heat can accomplish. But the natural power of fire is not to annihilate, but only to dissolve the composition and change the form of substances. To support the doctrine of annihilation, we must resort to the hypothesis, that after the fire has done its worst, God, by a special act, will annihilate the ashes together with the fire itself; which is not to be believed without decisive proof, and this proof we have not.

2. Our text and several similar passages of Scripture compel me to believe that new material heavens and a new material earth will be raised up to supply the place of those which the conflagration shall have destroyed. This being allowed, it seems more natural to suppose that the old materlals will be employed, than that they will be annihilated and new ones created in their stead. No conceivable end could be answered by such a change of materials, unless indeed the new ones were to be of a more pure and ethereal kind. But it is not for us to say that proper combinations of the elements which now exist, may not form bodies as splendid and glorious as any which could be created; especially as we know that the glorified bodies of the saints will be formed of materials which now exist on the earth, and that even the glorious body of Christ is formed of no other.

3. The new heavens and new earth seem evidently represented as a part of the vast plan of *restoration* which Christ undertook to accomplish.—

But it is not the part of Christ in this work to create out of nothing, but only to renew. He renovates the old soul and the old body: and if he shall renovate the whole material universe after its ruin by sin, it will be analogous to the rest of his work.

4. There is one remarkable expression, which, if it refers to the new heavens and new earth, as well as to the new state of the Church triumphant, strongly carries the idea of renovation. John saw in his vision Christ sitting on his throne, the heavens and earth fleeing away, a new heaven and a new earth arising, the New-Jerusalem, or the Church triumphant, displayed; and then heard a voice from heaven, saying, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things, [the former troubles,] are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold *I make all things new*." If this last expression refers, not only to the new *state* produced by the passing away of former troubles,—not only to the New-Jerusalem, or the Church raised to perfection and glory,—but, (as is thought by many,) to the new heavens and new earth which had just been mentioned, then it clearly conveys the idea of the renovation of the heavens and earth. "Behold I make all things new." This, whether it refers to the new state of the Church or to new material worlds, manifestly alludes to the old things, and implies a new formation of them. God would not have said at the conclusion of the first creation, when worlds were made out of nothing, "Behold I make all things new." If then the new heavens

and earth were referred to, (and they had just been mentioned,) the matter is decided.

5. The time of Christ's advent to judgment is called "the times of restitution of *all things*."—"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things." From the "all things" must certainly be excepted those wicked men and devils who are expressly reserved to that day for punishment. But something more, I think, must be included in the "restitution of all things," than the recovery of bodies from the grave, the restoration to perfect holiness of the few saints who shall be found alive, and the vindication of an impeached government by the explanations of the final judgment. If in that day the whole material universe, except human bodies, shall be reduced to nothing, it can hardly be called the day of the "restitution of *all things*."

6. But the passage on which the advocates for renovation chiefly rely, remains yet to be produced. It is found in the eighth chapter of Romans. "For the earnest expectation of the creature, [by creature here is understood the works of nature generally, or as they are called a little below, "every creature," or as it is in our translation, "the whole creation." For the earnest expectation of the creature] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, [to wit, in the resurrection.] For the creature was made subject to vanity, [to instability and decay,] not willingly, [which could not be said of man, who brought the evil upon himself by voluntary transgression. Not willingly,] but by reason

of him who hath subjected the same *in hope*. Because the creature *itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. FOR *we know that every creature*, [in our translation, "the whole creation,"] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

"The creature" which "was made subject to vanity," not by its own act, but by the appointment of God who "subjected the same in hope;" which "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," and whose "earnest expectation—waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" in the resurrection; cannot be the children of God themselves, for they "*also*," in distinction from "the creature," "groan within" themselves, "waiting for—the redemption of" the "body." It cannot be bad men, for they will have no deliverance in the resurrection. What then can it be since it is no part of the human race? The reasoning clearly shows that it is the same with "*every creature*," which our translators understood to mean "the whole creation." For after saying that "the creature was made subject to vanity" and shall be delivered in the resurrection, the apostle adds, "FOR we know that every creature, [in our translation, "the whole creation,"] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The argument plainly shows that by

"the creature" was intended "every creature," or "the whole creation," or the works of nature generally. This phrase, "the creature," has such a meaning in the first chapter of the same Epistle. "Who—worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." It is repeatedly used in the same sense in The Wisdom of Solomon, one of the books of the Apocrypha.

If then by "the creature" is meant "every creature" or "the whole creation," how is the whole creation to "be delivered," in the resurrection, "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God?" Not by annihilation, but by a glorious renovation, by which it shall be delivered from instability and decay and all the consequences of the sin of man, and shall attain to beauty and splendor and immortality. We are not bound by this passage to suppose that everything that now exists on earth, such as beasts, birds, trees, and plants, will sustain a resurrection. The prediction may be verified if the works of creation in general, and in particular the very substance which now composes the bodies of beasts, birds, trees, and plants, shall arise from its ruins in a glorious form, yet so changed as to exclude all the inferior objects of the present state.

But why, you may ask, if the heavenly bodies are to be continued in existence, should they be dissolved by fire, since they are not, as far as we know, defiled, as our earth is, by sin?

One end of their dissolution may be, that by a different composition of their materials they may

be rendered more pure and glorious. Every chemist knows that the same elements differently combined will form very different bodies.

Another end may be, to make a memorable display of God's abhorrence of everything which has had the most distant connexion with sin. Although the heavenly bodies may not contain sinful inhabitants, (as seems altogether likely,) yet they belong to a general system into which sin has entered. They have ministered to apostate man and lighted him in his course of rebellion. They have been prostituted to purposes of idolatry, and, by being worshipped as gods, have become in a sense the ministers of sin. Besides, we are assured that myriads of devils, who are called "spiritual wickedness in heavenly places," and whose prince is denominated "the prince of the power of the air," have ranged for six thousand years through the regions of the visible system; and we know of no barrier to prevent their approach to any of the heavenly bodies or to any of the regions which lie between them. We have therefore reason to believe that not only on our own earth and in our air, but also among suns and stars, they have roamed from age to age, and there have framed their machinations against God and his Son. What wonder then if these haunts of devils must be cleansed by a general burning?

To ascertain precisely what will be the use of the new heavens and new earth, is not at present in our power. Our text declares that both the new heavens and new earth will be inhabited by righte-

ousness, that is, by righteous persons. It states also that good *men* look forward with eager expectation to them as making amends for the loss of the old heavens and earth; which strongly implies that they are to inhabit them. When John in vision beheld the new heaven and new earth after the last judgment, he saw the Church coming down from God, and "heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," seemingly on the earth, or in the new earth and new heavens. From these passages we might suppose that the new earth and heavens will be the *sole* residence of good men, were it not that the kingdom into which they will *all* be invited at the conclusion of the final judgment, is said to have been prepared for them "from the foundation of the world." But how they can *all* enter and possess a kingdom prepared "from the foundation of the world," and yet all or any part of them dwell in the new heavens and new earth, we cannot at present determine. Should it be so ordered that all the saints shall have an inheritance in the highest heaven, but occasionally visit and reside in these lower worlds, (made glorious enough for their abode,) then both declarations would be fulfilled. This at present seems to be the most probable opinion; and it is one which has been suggested by learned expositors. Some have indeed thought that part of the saints may perhaps statedly dwell in heaven and the rest statedly on earth: and this might agree well enough with the theory of different degrees of glory; but it does not

appear to comport with the representation that all will be admitted to a kingdom prepared "from the foundation of the world." Mr. Mede supposes it probable that all the saints, when they descend to earth to receive their bodies, will remain here for a time and then migrate to the heavens. But the account of the consummation of all things in the 25th of Mathew, represents the saints as going directly from the judgment into a kingdom prepared "from the foundation of the world." Besides, this opinion suggests no use that is to be made of the new earth and heavens after that migration. And although so great a divine as Dr. Owen thought it probable that these lower worlds may be preserved, like the Jewish law after its abrogation, only as monuments of divine wisdom and goodness; yet I think it may be reasonably doubted whether the preservation of huge masses of dead matter, kept for no other use than to be gazed at, would be an exhibition either of wisdom or goodness. This remark contradicts the opinion that these lower worlds will be the places where inferior orders of saints will grow and ripen for the highest heaven; for then the time would come when all the saints, elevated to the empyreal heaven, would leave the new heavens and new earth deserted, and wholly useless but as objects to be gazed at. The most probable opinion seems to be that which was suggested before, viz. that the principal abode of all the saints will be the highest heaven, but that they will occasionally visit and reside in these lower worlds. The angels who minister to the Church,

do at present often visit our earth; and doubtless they visit other worlds, where they have opportunities to learn the wisdom and goodness of God by examining his works. Some such ends, and others now unknown to us, may probably be answered by the excursions which the saints will make to the new heavens and new earth.

We are accustomed to conceive of the saints as dwelling, all of them, constantly in one place, and never on any occasion leaving that abode. As this is the most simple idea, and well adapted to our infant state, no great pains are taken in the Scriptures to give us more complex ideas of the future world. But our Saviour speaks of "many mansions" in our Father's house. And it is easy to conceive that the beauty and glory of those mansions may be greatly increased by their being divided into many, rather than consolidated into one. When we lift our eye in a clear evening and contemplate the numberless worlds revolving above our heads, we are struck with a sense of greater beauty and skill than though we contemplated one immense world formed by a union of all these orbs. The symmetry of the whole and the sweet variety wrap the mind away with admiration of the beauty of creation and of the wisdom and power of the Creator. And the creation will forever be more beautiful and glorious, and a greater exhibition of the Architect, for being divided into "many mansions." The time will probably never come when creatures will not need to contemplate the creation, to enlarge their ideas of the wisdom, power, and good-

ness of God. The time will never come when they will not be enchanted with the beauty and variety of his works. The time will probably never come when they will cease to be refreshed with variety and change. A passage from world to world, which will doubtless be performed with incomparably more ease than journies now are from country to country, will instruct and delight them: and it may reasonably be supposed that all the worlds which they inhabit, will, in the way they travel, seem to them as much one kingdom as the American states seem to us one commonwealth. And if it shall at last be found that all the planets and stars were created and are reserved for this very use, and now stand in heaven to preach to men the future glory of the saints, it will greatly appear in what sense all things were created *for Christ*, according to the doctrine of the apostle.

To the question, "what purpose will these material things serve?" Mr. Mede replies by asking, "What purpose would they have served had man continued in innocence? And what use will there be of the body and bodily senses in heaven?"—"They will serve," continues he, a most noble purpose, even that to which they were originally destined; viz. the illustration of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, and also for the residence and comfort of the saints." Tolet says, "As the palace of a king is adorned for the glory of the king, so this whole world will be adorned and perfected for the sake of the glorious sons of God." Chrysostom says, "As the nurse of a royal infant, when he suc-

ceeds to the kingdom, is a partaker of good things on his account, so the creatures which have ministered to the comfort of the sons of God, when the latter shall inherit the kingdom, shall partake of the glory. Or it may be that the creatures will be restored to increase the glory of the sons of God; as when a father, about to exhibit his son in a public and splendid manner, clothes even the servants splendidly for the sake of the glory of the son."—Willet says, "The earth will be the seat of the just, that where they have suffered much, there also they may triumph and praise God." And indeed I think with him, that it must be highly interesting to the saints to visit a world which they once watered with their tears, and as far as former places can still be distinguished, to contemplate the spots where they once suffered, and where they wept and prayed together. It must be interesting to them, if the place can then be marked, to gaze on the spot which was once wet with their Redeemer's blood, and on the places which were filled with his sighs and tears. It must be interesting to see the world which their sins helped to destroy, illustriously restored by the power of their beloved Saviour.

And what a glorious triumph will the Son of God herein obtain over his enemy. When the conflagration shall have burnt out the last taint of sin, and those worlds which Satan hoped finally to ruin, shall rise from their ashes more glorious than at the beginning, and the universe shall be restored to more than its pristine splendor, filled with the blessed persons and exulting songs of countless millions

snatched from the shambles of hell, then how complete and glorious will his triumph be. Alleluia! Victory and dominion and glory to him who bruised the serpent's head and rebuilt demolished worlds!

And then how vast will the plan of restoration appear which Christ undertook to accomplish.—When suns and stars shall rise from their ashes, clothed with splendors before unknown; when the new creation shall appear so extensive that the whole Church, as important a part as it is, will be, as John represents it, but as a new city to a new universe; when it shall appear that the blood of Calvary and the power of Jesus rescued all the works of God, (a few forlorn outcasts excepted,) from the hands of destroying devils; then methinks I hear the saints calling aloud to infidels: This is the Jesus whom you despised: this is the substance and fulfilment of that Bible which you laughed to scorn. What think you of the great plan of redemption and of our Messiah now? And again ten thousand voices will shout, Alleluia: victory and dominion and glory to him who saved a dying race and rebuilt demolished worlds. If the fame of warriors who defended a people's rights, and of statesmen who raised a single nation from oppression, are heard in the ends of the earth and tremble in the breath of remote posterity, what praises shall resound through heaven and earth to him who raised from ruins a stupendous universe, and displayed countless worlds in all the glories of a new creation. And this is the Jesus and this the plan of restoration which infidel insects scorn and contemn.

Then will commence the golden age and halcyon days more happy than poets feigned. Then will be realized all those splendid descriptions of restoration, and of the glory and peace of Messiah's kingdom, which glowed under the pencil of enraptured prophets. These are "the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Lift up your heads, ye people of God, and sing, for your redemption draweth nigh. What though you are poor in this world, the new heavens and new earth will be all your own. Shortly you will own suns and stars, each of which in value would exceed this earth were it all of gold and diamond. Ye who must now walk on the earth lame and halt, while the world rattle by you in their splendid equipages, shall shortly make easy excursions from star to star and from world to world. With a band of glorious and happy spirits, ye shall walk abroad on a summer's day to visit other worlds, to touch at distant constellations, to revisit this little globe, and here sit and remember the days of other years, and mark where your enemies died and rose and went to hell. Of what little consequence it is how you are circumstanced in this world, provided you can obtain an inheritance in the new earth and heavens. This life is but a moment, but that will endure forever. I must press you with that exhortatory inference which Peter drew from these heavenly truths: "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace."

I cannot avoid dropping one word for men of the world. Where will *you* be when these new heavens and new earth shall be displayed? Through all the revolving ages of the coming world, where will *you* be? While the saints are walking from world to world, exalted to the dignity and glory of the sons of God, where will *you* be? Dying thus, you will be separated from all good men, and shut up in prison with a few filthy malefactors, whose number compared to that of the saints, will, I hope, (considering the countless millions who will be saved in the millenium,) be only as the few malefactors in our dungeons to the mass of society. Can you who pity the infamy of these wretches, endure to share the far greater infamy of the reprobate?—Though unbelief may now prevent you from feeling for your future selves, it will be your own selves still; and you will feel as exquisite a sense of disgrace as you would have done in this world. Flee, I beseech you, from this "shame and everlasting contempt:" flee from the infinite torture of endless burnings,—from perhaps eternally increasing agony: flee from the rage and torment of hellish passions: flee from the rending fury of devils; and seek the bosom of God; and seek a society that knows nothing but love; and seek eternal purity and honor; and seek an inheritance in the new heavens and new earth. What are your silver and your gold to the riches of those glorious worlds? What are your shops and your warehouses to that grand universal magazine of wealth? Drop from your arms this lumber which is devoted to the flames,

and embrace those riches which will endure forever. Lay up for yourselves treasures in the new heavens and new earth, where neither moth nor rust shall corrupt. While this earth is fast going to decay, and the very scaffolding of nature seems falling, O prepare to sit on thrones in the new heavens and new earth. Prepare to enjoy the eternal God as your infinite portion. Escape from all the rivalries and enmities of the wicked, to feast on the tenderness of his boundless love forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXXII.

THE LAMB IN THE MIDST OF HIS FATHER'S THRONE.

Rev. v. 6.

And I beheld and lo in midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.

In thinking of the exaltation of Christ we must not be careful to separate the two natures, and discriminate between the honors of the man and the honors of the God. With all this complex glory he has but one Person, and it is not so properly the glory of the *man* nor of the *God*, but of the *Mediator*. By a separation of the two natures, and a failure to carry through all the periods and modes of his existence the idea of the same *Person*, much confusion has been introduced and some error. Thus when the Son of man is represented as *coming down* from heaven and *returning* to heaven, it has been inferred that his human nature must have had a previous existence, as the God could not change place. But this inference is made without

considering that the same *Person*, the same *Mediator*, that was displayed in heaven, was afterwards displayed on earth, and then appeared in heaven again. He was the Mediator before his humanity existed. Then the scene of his display was heaven. When he became incarnate and appeared on earth, there were not two Mediators, one in heaven and another on earth. Earth then became the scene of the display of the one Mediator, as heaven had been before. The whole Mediator looked out of the eyes and spoke out of the lips of Jesus of Nazareth. When John approached him on earth and beheld him and worshipped him, though he saw nothing but the man, he saw the Person who constituted the only Mediator in existence: he saw the Person who had been displayed in heaven as the Mediator, and was now displayed as the Mediator on earth, and of course might be said to have come down from heaven. This carrying through all the states of his existence the idea of the same Person, the same Mediator, would prevent that misconstruction of texts which has led to a denial of his divinity, as well as that which has led others into the idea of the pre-existence of his human soul.

In this vision John had a view of the exaltation of the Saviour, and of something to remind him of the state from which he had been raised, the sufferings through which he had passed, and the true cause of his exaltation. He saw him in the midst of his Father's throne, surrounded by adoring saints and angels; but he saw him as the Lamb which had been slain, with all the marks of his

death upon him. It was as the Lamb slain that he was exalted. In this view John had notices of the atonement made by his passion, and of the glorious rewards of his obedience "unto death." He beheld in a figure what the Saviour had done and endured on earth, and what he had found in heaven. All his sufferings and work in this lower world, and all his reward and glory in the world above, were set forth, directly or indirectly, in this single picture; and it may lead us to cast a view over the whole.

I. There were notices of the atonement made by his sufferings. "A Lamb as it had been slain." He is called a Lamb in reference to the paschal lamb and other lambs offered in sacrifice under the old dispensation. These fully represented *him* who was meek, patient, unresisting, and who uttered no complaint against his murderers. They resembled him in that none were selected but those without blemish. But the point in which they were chiefly intended to set him forth, was that they were offered as a typical expiation for sin, their life being taken in lieu of the life of the transgressor.

If men were to be pardoned, it was necessary that Christ should die to answer the precise end of their punishment; that is, to convince the universe, as much as their punishment would have done, that God was determined to execute the penalty of his law on future offenders. The practical exhibition of this resolution was necessary to support the authority of the law, while, as a consequence, it showed God's love of holiness and hatred of sin,

and his inflexible determination to be rigorously just towards future offenders. These ends were all that could be accomplished by the punishment of transgressors; and these being fully answered by the death of Christ, it became consistent with the authority of the law, not indeed to shield incorrigible transgressors; (that would have ruined the law;) but to extend pardon to the penitent and reclaimed. This was the precise end of the atonement; and this end was answered by the sufferings of Christ in our stead.

II. There were notices of the glorious rewards of his obedience. He was in the midst of the throne, surrounded by the living creatures and the elders, (the representatives of the whole Church,) who were offering their adorations and thanksgivings. This, and every other part of his exaltation, he received as the reward of his obedience "unto death." "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became OBEDIENT *unto death*, even the death of the cross. *Wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, [to wit, the name of the Son of God;] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord* to the glory of God the Father."

If there were any reasons why Christ should obey, distributive justice required that he should receive a glorious reward. And it was desirable in itself that there should stand forth one pre-emi-

nent instance of the rewards of obedience, in order to show to the universe with what readiness and fulness God recompenses conformity to his law; thereby to exhibit how infinitely attached he is to holiness. Further, if it was necessary for Christ to be under law, it was necessary for him to obey in order to be holy, and of course in order to be accepted as an expiation; inasmuch as the sufferings of a sinner would have been deserved by himself, and could not have atoned for others. But it was necessary for him to be under law, that is, *off the throne*, that the stroke of the lawgiver might fall upon him, and that he might give satisfaction to one sitting on the throne and holding the rights of the Godhead. It was necessary that he should obey in the article of his death, that the stroke might manifestly come from the Lawgiver; for in no way could the Lawgiver officially strike but by commanding him to receive the blow. Nor could the Father in any character lay the stroke upon him, but either by forcing it upon one struggling against his authority, (in which case it would have been the sufferings of a sinner and of no efficacy to atone for others,) or by inflicting it upon one wholly ignorant of what was to happen, (which does not accord with Christ's frequent prediction of his death,) or by commanding him to die, and by his obediently yielding to the stroke. It was necessary for him to be obedient that he might be the well beloved Son; that so the Father's stroke might be as expressive of his determination to punish transgressors, as the eternal destruction of Adam's race

would have been. In these respects his obedience was necessary even to his atonement.

But his obedience was further necessary that God might have an opportunity to deliver over to him as his reward all the positive good ever intended for Adam's race; and thus adhere to the principle on which he set out in the commencement of his moral government, never to issue a positive good, (except to set creatures out in existence,) but as the reward of a perfect obedience; a principle which cast the highest honor upon his law. As the reward of his obedience, Christ became the "Heir of all things;" and in this new sense was displayed as the Son of God. And as soon as he was appointed to manage his own inheritance, (as was fit,) he became of course the universal King. And being such, it was no more than suitable that he should be arrayed in kingly honors.

For all these reasons it was proper that he should be under law and obey, and that for his obedience he should be exalted to all the honors and possessions and power which he now inherits.

And as the inheritance which was to come to his people must first be given to him, and so come to them through him; and as it was proper that he should be made the distributer of his own estate; it was suitable that his people should receive all their blessings from his hand. But inasmuch as the blessings come originally from God, and this fact was not to be hid behind a Mediator, but to be forever displayed, it was proper to hold up the blesssings as coming both from God and the Lamb,—

originally from God and immediately from the Lamb. And so it is. We are directed to ask God to send us blessings on Christ's account, and we are directed to ask Christ to send us what he has received from the Father. Hence the notice of the throne of God *and* of the Lamb, as that which keep the curse from his new Jerusalem, and out of which proceeds "the pure river of life." Hence the blessedness of the saints is ascribed both to Go and the Lamb. "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." In like manner God and the Lamb are associated as constituting the sun which illumines the heavenly city. "The city had no need of the sun neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." God is the source of the light and the Lamb is the medium through which it shines. He is "the image of the invisible God,"—"the word" by which the whole mind of God is expressed. By the works of creation produced "*by him and for him;*" by his providence which develops God's designs, (for the Lamb was appointed to open all the seals;) by his great mediatorial work; by the instructions which he has imparted in person and through his prophets and apostles; and by the Spirit which acts under him; he has brought forth all the light which has been shed on the character, government, and designs of God. Add to this, that the splendor surrounding his human body, and which he will impart to the

bodies of his saints as the royal robes in which the sons of God are to be set forth, will pour immortal day upon the senses. In the same way God and the Lamb are associated as the temple of the New-Jerusalem. "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" meaning that the vision of God and communion with him will be perfect and immediate, or through no other medium than the Lamb. Christians will not need those officers and ordinances which belonged to earthly temples,—those glasses through which they once saw darkly,—those imperfect ways in which they used to send up their worship; nor will they need houses for prayer when they have nothing more to ask. God and the Lamb will answer all these ends.

Not only will the Lamb impart as his own the blessings which he received from the Father, but as Heir of all things and universal King, he will claim his people for his property and subjects: and he is represented as keeping a book in which all their names are written, as men enter in books an account of their property, and as kings sometimes have registered the names of their subjects. None will enter the heavenly city "but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Amidst all the glory which will surround the Lamb that was slain, I see the different orders of creatures, and in the foremost rank the redeemed, pressing forward to lay their honors at his feet. John had a vision of this, and makes the following report. "After this I beheld, and lo a great multi-

tude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen: blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." At another time he saw a grand jubilee held in heaven in honor of the Lamb; the redeemed first beginning the song, the angels then striking in, and before it was done the whole creation joining in the bursting praise. "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and four and twenty elders, [the representatives of the whole Church,] fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song.—And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; (and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands;) saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,

heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever." Thus all creation, except the damned, join in the worship of God and the Lamb.

But who can conceive the gratitude which the redeemed will feel towards him who died for their lives? With what feelings did the affectionate John in Patmos say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." But with how much greater gratitude will the redeemed in heaven, when they see from what they were raised,—when they feel the great salvation which he procured for them,—when they discover the dignity and glory of the Sufferer, and see in his hands and in his side the prints of the nails and the spear; with how much greater gratitude will they cast their crowns at his feet and ascribe to him all the glory of their salvation. John had once an opportunity to see them at this employment. He beheld the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and

people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

How delightful to contemplate the honors which encircle the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne! After being here so long marred with grief and shame, how sweet to know that he has found a throne! After wandering an exile from heaven for more than thirty years for our revolt, and to seek through this wilderness that which was lost, we joy that he has found a home. After being so long unknown and neglected, we rejoice that he has found those who can honor his worth. After all the mockery of the judgment hall and the pretorium, we exult to hear the shout of all heaven in his praise. After the crown of thorns, we are enraptured to see him wear the diadem of the universe. After being cast out upon the wide world, not having where to lay his head, we triumph that a palace has received him. After depending for bread on the charity of his female followers, we are transported to see him the heir of all things and able in his turn to impart to others. After being so long a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,—after all the agonies of the garden and the cross,—we sing and shout for joy that he has found repose,—that he has found infinite and eternal delight in the glory of his Father and the salvation of his Church. Let him have his happiness and his honors. Amidst all the sufferings of life, it shall be our solace that the man of sorrows is happy,—that the despised Nazarene is honored at last. Of all the luxuries that ever

feasted the soul, the sweetest is to see the Lamb that was slain in the midst of his Father's throne.

My dear brethren, we came here to day to find him in the place of graves; but he is not here, he is risen.

> "With joy we tell the scoffing age,
> He that was dead has left the tomb:
> He lives above their utmost rage,
> And we are waiting till he come."

We had thought to come and stand and weep where Mary wept; but while we were coming, the angel descended and rolled back the stone, and lo the mangled body has taken its flight. We saw that body mangled; we saw the stripes cut deep into his sacred flesh; we saw his temples gored with thorns; we heard the loud roar of vulgar mockery; we saw him borne away on the tide of popular fury; we saw his cross erected; we saw his hands and feet extended and nailed to the wood. We stood weeping and trembling six hours as he hung on the torturing spikes, under the burden of our sins; we saw his mother swoon and sink to the earth; we saw John as pale as death; we saw heaven and earth convulsed; we heard his dying groan; we saw him committed to the sepulchre. And we had now come to embalm him. But he is not here. O could we hear him speak to us as he did to Mary before the sepulchre, with what transport would we also cry, Rabboni! and rush into his arms. Yes and we *will* embalm him still. We will embalm his name in our hearts. We will embalm it among our

children and friends by the memorial of his love which we are about to set forth. We will embalm it by a life savoring of his loveliness. We will embalm it by our praise, which shall be prolonged while we have breath, and sink away at last upon our dying lips. And we will embalm it among the songs of the upper world. O if we are permitted to come and stand where the elders bow before the Lamb enthroned, how will *we* bow and sing! When we shall look down to hell and see our old companions there, and then back to Calvary, and then look up and read the touching traces of love in those melting eyes, and among the prints of the thorns, we *will* embalm his name if love and songs can do it. We will tell all heaven of his love. If ever new inhabitants should come in from other worlds, they shall hear the story of Calvary. If commissioned in remote ages of eternity to visit other planets, we will carry to them the amazing tidings. We will tell the story to all we meet. We will erect monuments of the wonderful facts on every plain of heaven, and inscribe them all over with the story of the manger, the garden, and the cross.—While gratitude and truth remain, the name and the love of Jesus shall never be forgotten. It shall be the sweetest part of our heaven to see him on the throne,—to see him bending with infinite delight over his beloved Church,—to hear that shout of praise from all the redeemed, from all the angels, from all the holy creation. It shall be our heaven to bow with them and join the song.

But poor miserable sinners, where will *you* be? While all this burst of joy and praise is heard in heaven, where will *you* be? During all the coming ages of that glorious eternity, where will *you* be? While your blessed parents and friends are feasting above, O where will *you* be? Saying "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come and who shall be able to stand?"

SERMON XXXIII.

HOW CAN I PUT THEE AMONG THE CHILDREN.

JER. III. 19.

But I said, How shall I put thee among the children and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the host of nations? And I said, Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me.

These words were primarily addressed to the ten tribes of Israel, who had been carried captive about a century before by the king of Assyria. God seems to be revolving in his mind the immense difficulties in the way of restoring them to the character of children and to the land and privileges of their fathers, and inquires with himself, or proposes the inquiry to them, how so great a restoration could be accomplished. To the eye of reason it seemed impossible. They had been transported into the country of the Medes, and other nations had been brought in to possess their lands and to fill their cities. The whole authority of the Assy-

rian monarch, who at that time possessed almost all Asia, had guaranteed their country to its new possessors and confined *them* to the land of their captivity. The power of Assyria was continually increasing, and no prospect of the subversion of that immense empire appeared. The captive tribes had built houses and planted vineyards in Media, and had gradually become attached to that country as their home, and in the same proportion had become weaned from the inheritance of their fathers. The prospect of their ever being able or willing to return was daily decreasing. And to swell the difficulties, they who had been banished from the presence of God for their idolatry, were growing more and more heathenish from their connexion with the nations among whom they were scattered. But they must be recovered to holiness and to the pure worship of God before they could be restored to the privileges of the Church. To complete the seeming impossibility, all their past sins stood like mountains between them and God. And now the question arose, how could they who had done so much to wean the love of God from them, who were scattered among the heathen, attached to their new homes, growing more and more heathenish, held in captivity by all the power of the Assyrian empire; their former possessions desolated, their cities burned, and the wasted country in the hands of other inhabitants; how could they be restored to the former character and privileges of Israel? Over these difficulties God seems to be pondering when he inquires, "How shall I put thee among the children

and give thee a pleasant land, a goodly heritage of the host of nations?" At last he seems to make up his mind, and graciously resolves, "Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me." I will recover thee to holiness and keep thee holy by my power, and then I will restore thee to the privileges of my Church. This he partly did when he brought back the Jews from Babylon, among whom many of the ten tribes returned; and this he will do to a more perfect degree in the latter day.

Agreeably to the analogy of Scripture, the text may be applied to sinners in general; and then it will furnish us with this DOCTRINE, *that there are very great, and to the eye of reason insurmountable difficulties in the way of putting sinners among the children of God and bringing them to the land of promise.*

These difficulties may be classed under three heads; the greatness of their guilt, the strength of their corruptions, and the number and power of their spiritual enemies. Let us consider these difficulties distinctly.

I. The greatness of their guilt. They have sinned against God, by breaking his law, and by that law they are condemned to eternal death. How can they escape? The law must be supported, for it is the basis on which rest the order and happiness of the universe.. But if the law be not executed how can it be supported? All the terrors of the unchangeable law of God are levelled against them, and how can they escape?

Further, their sins have been attended with many

great aggravations. They have trampled on the authority and majesty of the infinite God. They have sinned against all the wisdom and goodness and mercy of God. Though he has nourished and brought them up as children, they have rebelled against him. Though he has been infinitely more kind to them than ever earthly parent was, his kindness has made no impression on their hearts. In violating his righteous law they have attacked the foundation on which rest the order and happiness of his kingdom. They have sinned against the rights and interests of the universe. Have they not? They have refused to yield the throne to God; they have refused to love their neighbor as themselves; they have refused to extend their affections to God's immense and holy kingdom and to set up this as their beloved and highest interest; they have indulged that selfishness which would sacrifice God and his creation to advance their own ends,—the same selfishness that produces all the rancor and rage of the damned. In all this they have risen up against the honor and happiness of God,—against the comfort and glory of the universe. Their selfishness and pride have tended to disjoint and destroy the whole: and as they are chargeable with all the effects which their conduct *tends* to produce, they are as guilty as though they were now returning from the ashes of a demolished universe burnt down by their wicked hands. All this they have done; and when God has sought to reclaim them, they have resisted all the means which he has used for this purpose. They have neglected

sacraments and prayer and the word of God. They have profaned sabbaths, profaned the house of God, and grieved his holy Spirit. They have sinned against light and against conscience. By their unbelief and sins they have murdered the Lord of life and glory in the very act of plucking them from destruction, and are daily trampling in the dust his sacred blood. How can sinners loaded with such enormous guilt be restored?

Further, the *number* of their sins is countless.—One violation of all these obligations,—one insurrection against all these sacred rights,—deserves eternal death. "The soul that sinneth," if it be but once, "shall die," is the tenor of the divine law. Indeed if one sin does not deserve eternal punishment, no number can. If one sin, for instance, deserves only a thousand years of punishment, then ten deserve only ten thousand years, and a hundred a hundred thousand; and as no collection of units can make an *infinite* number, (there being always *two ends* to the series,) no number of sins can deserve an infinite or endless punishment if one does not. What then is the demerit of a single sin? And now if you can count the sands of the sea, rehearse the number of their sins. As often as their bosom has heaved with the breath of life, it has moved with rebellion against God.—Every moment that has passed over their heads has found them breaking that law which constantly stands over them and says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" and "thy neighbor as thyself." For thirty, forty, and fifty years

they have been in God's world without ever striking one stroke in the great business for which they were created. All this time the talents which God gave them and commanded them to occupy for him, have been buried in a napkin. One sin deserves eternal punishment, and yet millions and millions stand charged against them. Their guilt, like mountains piled on mountains, rises to the very heavens and cries for vengeance: how can they possibly escape?

Shall I not stop here? Need another word be said to plunge them into eternal despair?———— But this is not the end: for,

II. There is another difficulty, which consists in the strength of their corruptions. They are "dead in trespasses and sins." Their hearts are "enmity against God," wholly averse to his service, and wholly attached to sin and the world. And this enmity is so great that no persuasions, no motives, no means can subdue it. They are even opposed to the means which God has instituted for their recovery. They are opposed to Christ, the only deliverer sent from God to rescue them from ruin.— They are displeased with the terms and even with the blessings of the Gospel. Whatever attempts God makes to recover them, they resist. He sent his Son, and him they rejected. He sent his word, and that they oppose. He sends his Spirit, and him they grieve away. All the efforts and entreaties of God and man have been to no purpose except to harden them the more. Heaven, earth, and hell have been drained of motives, but motives are

lost on beings resolved to reject a Saviour though at the expence of their own eternal ruin. They would sooner plunge into hell, than into the bosom of God. They would sooner lie down in fire for a long eternity, than love infinite beauty and be thankful for dying love. What then can be done? What power can surmount these strong and numberless barriers?

Even after the soul is converted by divine grace, these corruptions continue to struggle. They hang upon it and hold it back in all its way to glory, and the poor backward thing must be carried the whole way in the arms of God. Every Christian knows and is often greatly alarmed at the strength of his remaining corruptions, which will not go themselves, and grieve the Spirit which comes to help him on his way. In us, that is in our "flesh, dwelleth no good thing." All that tends towards God in the best Christian on earth, is the result of a foreign influence. And should the best Christian, even in old age and on the borders of heaven, be deserted by this foreign influence,—from the threshold of glory, from the vision of the Lamb he would retreat, and urged by the malignity of his own heart, would plunge into everlasting darkness and blasphemy. Such strong resistance to salvation is made, from first to last, by all that is natural to the human heart. How then can sinners be saved?

Is it worth while to proceed any further? Need another word be said to extinguish the last hope of man? ——— But I have not even yet done: for,

III. There is still another difficulty, which con-

sists in the number and power of their spiritual enemies. The world, the flesh, and the devil are leagued against them. Two worlds are embodied to oppose their passage, and they are in arms against themselves. They have to encounter the examples, the frowns, and the blandishments of the world. They have to encounter numberless invisible tempters, whose perseverance, skill, and advantages to ensnare are greater than we can tell. They have to encounter all the appetites of the flesh and all the corruptions of the heart. They are like infants besieged by veteran armies, with invisible pits and snares spread thickly around their feet, and they themselves covered with a stupor which disqualifies them for the least exertion. They are surrounded by victorious enemies, who hold them bound and hand-cuffed, and have lodged spies and sentinels in their very bosom. Every creature of God seems leagued against them, and none in all the world is for them,—at least none that can afford them any effectual aid.

These are the mighty difficulties which lie between them and heaven. The great God as he ponders over these difficulties, seems to look around as though perplexed with their magnitude and number, and inquires, "How shall I put thee among the children?"

Must we then despair? On this spot must the last hope of a sinking world be entombed? Must we and our poor children lie down in everlasting burnings? Yes, —— yes *surely*, —— unless help comes from some higher deliverer. But hark! I

hear a sound! It seems the voice of mercy. It comes floating down by the way of Calvary and bursts upon our delighted ear: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace" and "good will towards men." The remedy is found at last in the gracious *sovereignty* of God. The only way of putting sinners among the children is at length fallen upon. "And I said, Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me." This gracious purpose of God, on which rest all the hopes of a dying world, implies three things.

1. That he will beget in sinners a filial temper. He speaks absolutely. "Thou *shalt* call me my Father."

2. That he will be a father to them; that he will pardon their sins and treat them with affection and care.

3. That he will keep them by his power "through faith unto salvation," "Thou shalt call me my Father, and *shalt not turn away from me*." He engages to take the work into his own hands, and to see to it himself that they never turn away from him. It is his business and care to carry on the work till it is completed.

It is remarkable that God assigns no other reason for doing all this than his own sovereign pleasure. He does not say, *For such good works of thine* I will bring thee to call me Father. In answer to the perplexing question, "How shall I put thee among the children?" we hear only this, "And *I said*, Thou shalt call me my Father." I chose it should be so: I spoke and I alone. It is not said,

Thou saidst *thou wouldst* call me my Father; *thou* chosest; but, *I* said. *I* was the mover: I fixed the event in my own gracious purpose. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

God is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. He laid the foundation, and he must put on the top stone. He first formed the purpose, moved by nothing but his own amazing goodness. He sent his Son to make atonement, and atonement was made, full and satisfactory. He sent his Spirit to apply the purchased salvation; to awaken the stupid, to convince the awakened, to convert the convinced, and to train the converted for glory. And when the soul is brought to call him my Father, he most freely becomes a Father to it, and takes the finishing of its salvation into his own hands. All the resources for the salvation of sinners are found in God alone. There is no way in which these mighty difficulties can be surmounted but by the sovereign and invincible energies of divine grace. "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord." "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God, [—*only* upon God,—] for my expectation is from him." "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." These words sum up the whole matter. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." The ruin of sinners is entire; but in Christ they are complete. The ruin is so thorough and universal, that all created power can do nothing towards restoring them. They are dead,—completely and eternally dead; and their ruin is alto-

gether from themselves : but in God is their help ; help fully adequate to their necessities if they will but apply ; help that will overcome resistance itself in every case fixed upon by infinite wisdom and love.

From this view of things it appears,

I. That the ruin of human nature is complete, and that the only hope of man is in the mercy of God through Christ. Some are in the habit of representing human nature as somewhat imperfect, but found their hopes on the smallness of their sins and the general innocence of their lives. And hence they are disgusted at pointed descriptions of human depravity and ruin. Such descriptions discourage and offend them. But *I* hold it impossible to exaggerate the natural depravity and ruin of man ; and I found my hopes for his salvation, not on his comparative innocence, but on the blood and Spirit of Christ. I condemn despondency as much as they ; but I would seek to relieve it, not by imaginary notions of the smallness of sin, but by looking to him who came to save the chief of sinners. There is indeed abundant hope for man, but it does not lie in his comparative innocence, but in the grace and fulness of him who came to pluck a ruined world from the very jaws of death,—who came to wash *them* white in his blood who deserved to be trampled down into " shame and everlasting contempt." There is indeed abundant hope for man ; but it is not because *he* is good, but because *God* is good. Let sinners awake to hope and to rapture as fast as they please, but let them so hope as to exalt Christ

rather than themselves. Let the glooms of guilt be brushed from every soul, but let the light and hope come from Christ alone. Human nature is *more* sunk and lost in itself than human tongue ever represented or human heart conceived; and yet there is abundant reason for human sinners to fill heaven and earth with acclamations of joy for redeeming mercy. Is this gloomy preaching? I point out a more effectual method to banish gloom than any fond advocate for the purity of human nature ever propounded. Why will not this satisfy men? Ah, it has but one defect. It gives all the glory of their salvation to Christ and strips it from them. And is this deemed a defeat? Is this your gratitude to him who left the realms of glory to endure shame and suffering and death for you, that you might be lifted from despair to hope and to heaven? Do you now grudge him a little meager praise? Would you wish to filch it from him and to claim it yourselves? Have you no other returns to make but to affirm that you were not sick and had no need of the Physican? Is all the thanksgiving you have to bring a solemn charge that he rashly threw away his life? Come boldly forward, ye sticklers for the purity of human nature, and put your secret pleas into open language. Speak out like men. Ah, will ye not start and turn pale at the sound of your own voice? Will not your blood curdle in your veins as ye utter the blasphemous sentence? Why then brood over feelings in secret which you dare not express? Or why support propositions and shrink from their legitimate consequences?

II. Let all men be exhorted to look to God alone for the gift of eternal life, and to cast themselves wholly on him for every part of their salvation. You cannot remove these mighty difficulties which lie between you and heaven. You who are Christians are deeply sensible of these truths, whatever else you may be unable to feel. Your eyes are daily upon the heavens whence "cometh" your "help." But let me press this point on those who are yet in their sins. Who shall raise you, poor, prayerless, unsanctified souls, from the "horrible pit" and "miry clay?" Who shall purge from you this world of *guilt?* Who shall subdue the stubbornness of your *corruptions?* Who shall deliver you from all your *spiritual enemies?* Here you lie bound by this three fold chain, which all the men on earth and all the angels in heaven cannot dissolve. All creation cannot relieve you. Your own independent efforts cannot relieve you. You must forever sink deeper and deeper in this "horrible pit" unless God should bend a pitying look upon you, —unless God shall stretch forth his hand and raise you from destruction. You lie wholly at his mercy. If he frown you die, if he smile you live forever. You are altogether in his hands, and all creation cannot take you out. What then is to be done? Will you therefore turn your backs upon him, and under the dreadful pretence that you have nothing to do, take no further care for your salvation? Under the pretence that God must do the work, will you indifferently turn away to other matters? Rather ought you not to go to him and cast your-

selves upon him, and by faith and prayer engage him to undertake for you? If a child is conscious that it cannot walk without the aid of its parent, does it therefore flee from its parent? Does it not rather creep to his feet, and hang upon his knees, and put its little hand into his hand, to be supported and led by a parent's care? Go ye therefore and do likewise. Look to the *Spirit* of Christ to subdue your stubborn hearts. Look to the *power* and *grace* of Christ to deliver you from your spiritual enemies. Look to the *blood* of Christ to cleanse you from guilt. Look to the *mercy of God* to pardon your sins and adopt you as his children. Thus cast yourselves heartily and without reserve on the power and grace of the adorable Trinity, and keep your eyes on the heavens whence "cometh" your "salvation." Lay aside all hope of relieving yourselves,—all hope of obtaining relief from others, and put forth your hand and take hold of omnipotent grace.

III. "If the righteous scarcely" are "saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" If such immense difficulties lie in the way of the salvation of Christians, and of sinners who are thoroughly awakened, what will become of those who are asleep in carnal security? Are there any present who know themselves to be in "the gall of bitterness," and yet are unconcerned about their state? Know ye, my unhappy hearers, that all the difficulties which have been enumerated lie in the way of *your* salvation, and they must all be surmounted or you must endure a miserable eternity.

With so much to be done are you still asleep? Life is rapidly wearing away, and you have never yet *begun* your work. What calculations are you making for eternity? *When* are all these difficulties to be surmounted? Do you flatter yourselves that they will be removed *while you sleep?* This is one of the incoherent dreams of delirium. *When* are you then to awake and begin this mighty business? Thirty, forty, fifty years of your life are past, and the great business of life not yet *begun*, —nor any serious *attempt* to begin it,—nor any *anxious thought* about *making* the attempt, or even about *neglecting* it so long. And yet all this time it is as true as the being of a God, that you must meet and surmount all these difficulties or make your bed in hell. Yea it is true that while you delay, these difficulties are hourly increasing. What phrenzy has seized your brain? O if there is one glimmering of reason left,—if one lucid interval of sense,—hear this expostulation and awake without delay. Hasten to the throne of God and cast yourselves at his feet, and throw yourselves upon his mercy. Do it, I beseech you, that your souls may live. Do it before you leave your seats. Do it *now*. ————Have you done it? If not you deserve eternal wrath for that neglect.

Whatever be the issue you have been warned. You may remember this warning when you lie tossing on a dying bed. You may remember it when you stand trembling at the bar of God. While the heavens are passing away and the world is on fire, perhaps I may hear you cry, Ten thousand worlds

that I had listened to that sermon! Take it and carry it with you to judgment, or it will inevitably follow you. It will certainly meet you there. God grant that it may not rise up in judgment against you.

SERMON XXXIV.

WHAT AILETH THEE?

GEN. XXI. 17.

What aileth thee?

This pointed question I wish to put to those who, while they wholly neglect religion, complain of the doctrines of the Gospel as blocking up their way to heaven. Though God has wrought miracles of mercy for our guilty race; though he has sent his Son to die for us, and has offered salvation to all on the easiest possible terms, nay has followed men with the most tender entreaties; yet murmurs are raised through all the world against him and against the way of life which he has opened, as though he had done nothing but oppress a miserable race.—And what is more astonishing, these murmurs come chiefly from those who wholly neglect their own salvation and the means which God has appointed. With all the inconsistency of the slothful servant, they bury their talent in a napkin, and then com-

plain of God as a hard master, "reaping where" he hath "not sown and gathering where" he hath "not strowed." Their grand objection is, that their salvation depends on God, who holds the decision of their fate in his own hands, and of course "hath —mercy on whom he will have mercy." They are not willing that this doctrine should be true, or if true that it should be preached. They wish to have the decision of their fate in their own hands, and yet are not willing to do that which would decide it favorably. If pressed to become religious, they excuse themselves with the plea that they are not able. They strenuously maintain that they cannot change their own hearts, and that the decision of their fate rests with God. They show a zeal in the argument which discovers that they are not to be beaten,—that they will not *suffer* their fate to be in their own hands; because then they would have a disagreeable task to perform; they would have to set about working out their own salvation; they would have to engage in family and closet prayer, in religious conversation, in meetings for devotion. They would have to renounce the world and take their heart from idols. They would have to spend their days in meditating upon God, in humbling themselves for sin, in renouncing their own righteousness and depending on a Saviour, in watching and wrestling against their own corruptions. All this they are unwilling to do, and therefore are anxious to make out that they cannot. They throw their fate out of their hands and will not have it there, lest it should impose on them disagreeable duties.

But when you take the other side of the question, and insist that their fate *does* depend on the sovereign will and decree of God; though this is the necessary inference from their former plea, they object and complain again. It is hard that they cannot have a voice in the decision of their own fate, —that God should create so many who he knew would fall, and whom he was determined not to renew,—that they should be required to do impossibilities,—that their salvation should be suspended on conditions which they are unable to fulfil,—that do what they will they cannot change the purpose of God nor promote their own salvation. Some of these men, at the moment that they are covering themselves with the plea of inability, (which certainly leaves their salvation to the election of God,) deny the doctrine of election. To excuse their neglects they plead that they cannot; and though this inevitably casts their salvation on the will and election of God, they deny that election. And why? Because they cannot bear to have the decision of their fate in the hands of God. They will have it neither one way nor the other. Other sinners who *admit* the decree of election, murmur against it as taking away their power, as being partial and unjust, as being full of discouragement, and object to its being preached. Some of this class, while they admit their dependance, deny their obligation; and as soon as they are forced to admit their obligation, complain of their dependance and want of power. They are not willing to be both dependant and under obligation; nor are they willing to have the

power in their own hands, for that would impose duties which they are unwilling to perform. They love to *excuse* themselves with the plea that they are not able, and yet they complain of the want of power. They love to put the business out of their hands to get rid of the obligation, and yet they murmur that it is in the hands of God. Let me come at the conscience of these men and demand of them one by one, "What aileth thee?" What do you want? What alteration would you have? What would satisfy you? "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented." If we say you have power, you will not have it so because that would lay you under obligations; if we say you are dependant, you resist because that puts your fate out of your own hands. How then would you have it? Do you know your own minds? The fact is, that you wish your destiny in your own hands, and yet would excuse yourselves from obligations.

Poor sinner, here you are in God's world, guilty, condemned, and going on to judgment. In what way do you hope to escape from the dreadful condition into which you have plunged yourself by sin? A Saviour is provided and offered to you; in what way do you expect to obtain a part in him? Take any ground you please, only keep to it. What ground then will you take? One thing you must distinctly understand. You cannot support the plea of inability and at the same time deny the doctrine of election. One ground or the other must be given up. If you cannot change your own

heart, then God must change it if it is changed; and as he is immutable, he must have eternally determined whether to change it or not: and then he must have eternally determined, (for all men by nature are in the same condition,) whose hearts he would change and whose he would not. And this is election. If on the other hand you can, (in every sense of the word,) change your own heart, —or more properly speaking, if the heart does in fact change without the special interposition of God, then the doctrine of election is false; but you must never again plead your inability. Take which ground you please, but do not attempt to hold both.

If you say that you *can* change your own heart in every sense of the word,—that the doctrine of election is false and ought not to be preached; it is all very well: only *prove* it false by actually changing your own heart. What ministers preach on this subject cannot harm you. It cannot lessen your power. They say indeed that your heart is so opposed to God that it *never will* love him of its own accord. If they are mistaken in this matter, you need not be disturbed by what they say: their preaching leaves you where you were before. It is only for you to prove their errors by turning your heart yourself. If you will set about this matter, no minister will attempt to hinder you; they will all rejoice in your success. Come then, change your own heart, and begin at once to love your Maker. You are under infinite obligations to love him. He is love itself. His holiness and justice are only modifications of love. His moral govern-

ment, with all its tremendous sanctions, is dictated by nothing but love; and it opened a way for all those miracles of mercy and of truth and of the glory of God which are displayed in the Gospel. He solemnly commands you to love him this moment. You are pressed with the whole weight of his awful authority. Come then, begin at once to love your Maker.

Is it done? If not, how long a time do you ask for the purpose? It behooves you to do it as soon as possible, for life is uncertain. You may die before another morning; and if you die unchanged, you roll in everlasting fire. How long a time then will it require? If it is a week's work, certainly, with death at the door, you ought not to delay a moment. Will you promise then to come here with a new heart the next sabbath? Why should you hesitate? If you are independent of God in this matter, and have all that is necessary in yourself, what should hinder? what should occasion delay? what should raise a doubt? Thus you see that we open the door wide. Never complain again that the preaching of election blocks up your way to heaven. You now have a fair chance to go by your own power. Go, and no one will hinder you. If you have a more pliable heart than we have supposed, it is all well; now is the time to prove it.

But remember that to love God is a very serious matter. It is not to have a few emotions of selfish gratitude, a few excitements of animal passion. It is to love him for what he is in himself; it is to

love him better than every other object, and to take the heart from the world. "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." To love God is to love his law and government, to hate sin, to feel the justice of your condemnation, to renounce your own righteousness, to come as a broken hearted and empty handed beggar to plead for mercy, to cast yourself upon Christ and heartily to approve the way of salvation by him. Now if your heart *will* do all this of its own accord, let it be done. No body will hinder you. You *ought* to do it. You ought to do it now. Infinite obligations lie upon you. Infinite dangers attend a moment's delay.

But perhaps you will admit that God himself has said,—we have already considered what *ministers* preach,—perhaps you will admit that *God himself* has said, that your heart is so opposed to him that it *never will* turn of its own accord. Let us then stand for a moment on this ground. Do you dislike this declaration? Do you believe that God is mistaken? Be it so: the declaration then will do you no harm. Certainly God will not hinder you if you are disposed to turn to him. Prove the mistake then by turning without his aid. If your heart is better and more flexible than he has represented,

the way is still open for you to turn. His declaration does not prevent you: it does not take away your power. One thing is never to be questioned; if you *will* renounce the world and give your heart supremely to God, and repent of your sins and cast yourself upon Christ, *he will accept you*. He has declared without any exception, "He that believeth —shall be saved." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "A broken and a contrite heart," in whomsoever found, he will "not despise." The invitations and promises are to all.— "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Now if you *will* accept these invitations and turn to God, he will certainly receive you. No declaration or decree will keep you off. If you have a heart to turn, God will not prevent. He says indeed that you *will not;* but if you *will*, all shall yet be well; he will certainly receive you. You stand on as fair ground as it is possible for a sinner to hold. If you do not turn it will not be owing to another; it will be your own fault. Why then do you complain? "What aileth thee?"

But perhaps, while you deny election, you are willing to admit that you cannot change your own heart yourself; but you insist that by seeking you can induce God to change it for you. Be it so; why then do you not induce him? Why are you buried in the world and neglecting prayer and the Bible? If earnest prayer and solemn attendance on all the means of grace, are to induce God to do this great work for you, why are you not about it? To come once a week to his house for entertainment or for fashion sake, and to bury yourself for the rest of the week in the world, is this the course of seeking which is to induce God? Why are you not besieging the throne of grace day and night with tears? If his decree of election is only a design to give a new heart to those who seek it with an old heart, and seek it without his special influence, what are you waiting for? Then it is your own fault that you have not induced him long ago. Why then do you complain? How unreasonable to neglect religion altogether, and then spend your life in murmuring against the doctrines of the Gospel, and the way of salvation as too exclusive and difficult.

But perhaps you will change your ground and admit the doctrine of election and your dependance on God, and that you can neither change your own heart nor induce God to change it. And then you complain again. What is the matter now?

Do you complain of your general dependance for life and all its blessings, and particularly for holiness? This is only to complain that you are a

creature. God could not have made creatures less dependant either for life or holiness, for he is necessarily the source of both. It was impossible for him to make them *self existent* and *independent;* for this would have been creating other *uncreated* Gods. Your complaint then is this, that you were created. And is this really the charge which you mean to bring against your Maker?

But you complain that it depends on his *special* interposition to change your heart. What a strange complaint is this! That circumstance is owing to *you*, not to *him*. Why is his special interposition necessary to change your heart? or why is any change needful? It is because you are wickedly opposed to him, and your opposition is so strong that *motives* cannot induce you to turn. He has pressed you with all the motives which heaven, earth, and hell can furnish, but all in vain. He has exhausted entreaties, but entreaties are lost upon creatures so unyielding. It is an everlasting blot on creation that God has to speak a second time to induce creatures to love him. But all the motives in the universe, urged with all the eloquence of heaven, cannot induce you. This dreadful stubbornness is the only reason why a *special* interposition is necessary. And this necessity which you yourself have created, and which is an eternal shame to you, you allege against God. "O shame, where is thy blush?"

But rushing from one extreme to another, you at length positively declare that you have no *natural ability* to love God. Then you can be under no

obligation. No command from any being could lay you under obligation to carry that mountain, because you have not natural ability to do it; that is, you have no power *if ever so much disposed.*— But can you say that you have no power to love God *if ever so well disposed?* The physical faculties of a rational soul constitute that power. Wherever there is a rational soul with competent light, there is one who can certainly love God if his heart is well disposed: there is one then that has natural ability; there is one that can be laid under obligation by a command. Men do not depend on God for their natural ability, only as they depend on him for their rational existence. The dependance of sinners which is so much talked of, is for the conquest of those stubborn hearts for which they alone are to blame. They ought not to have such hearts; and the necessity of God's interference is because they are so stubborn that no motives will subdue them. Their dependance for such a conquest of their wilful opposition, does not lessen their obligation, because it does not lessen the natural ability on which their obligation rests. Being rational, they have power to love God if their hearts are well disposed; and that power, which is the basis of obligation, is what is meant by natural ability, and is not diminished by that stubbornness which will not yield till God subdues it,—is not diminished therefore by their dependance on God for a new heart.

Do you still say that you have no natural ability to love God? This dreadful allegation represents

the ever blessed God as the most horrible of all tyrants, commanding impossibilities, and inflicting eternal torments for non-performance. It contradicts of course the whole tenor of his word, which represents sinners as complete moral agents, with full powers and perfect obligations, and wholly to blame for not returning to him. But I must be permitted to tell you that you do not believe this plea yourself. Did you really believe that you are in the hands of such a tyrant, would you be thus at ease? Would a man locked up in a burning house be playing with toys? When you come to me trembling like Belshazzar, I will believe you in earnest. But now I must consider your plea only an excuse from a disagreeable duty.

But while you are complaining of God as a hard master, requiring more than you are able to perform, you are actually doing nothing. Is this the way to treat a master who requires too much? I hear him say, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received my own with usury."

You complain that you have no power. But God has not taken away your power. If you have lost it you have thrown it away yourself. But you have not lost it. You still possess entire natural ability to do all that God requires. The only impediment lies in your unreasonable opposition to God. And this being the case, will you tell me that you *cannot*

love him? that with all his glories shining around you, you cannot find it in your heart to love such a God? that with all your enormous guilt upon you, you cannot repent? Do you carry about such an abominable heart as this? And do you cast the blame of all this upon God?

If you are not yet satisfied, it is because you wish for one of these four things: first, to have that religion acceptable to God which you are disposed to practise of your own accord without any special influence from him; a religion consisting in natural integrity with a heart set upon the world; or secondly, that God should be bound to give you the acceptable religion on your seeking it with such a temper as you now possess: (in either case the issue would be under your own control, independent of any *special* influence or special decree of God:) or thirdly, that he would give you the acceptable religion without your seeking it at all; or fourthly, that he would save you without any religion, and be your character what it may.

In regard to the first and fourth of these wishes, viz. to be saved *without any religion*, or with no other than that of *common morality*, with a heart supremely attached to the world; I remark, first, that you ought not to expect God to change his religion for you. His religion is that of the heart, consisting in love to God and man, in deadness to the world, and in a practice growing out of these affections. This is far unlike that superficial morality which leaves the heart in the possession of idols. You ask God to change his religion to gratify a

rebel, and to lower it down to something unworthy of himself. Secondly, it is impossible for him to make that right which is wrong, or that wrong which is right. In his requirements he tells you what *is* right and what is wrong. He cannot change those requirements without falsehood,—without declaring right to be wrong and wrong right. It would also be giving up the rights of the Godhead,—the claims of God to the hearts of his creatures. It would convert a law which is the greatest blessing to the universe, into a general curse, and into a disgrace to the Lawgiver. Thirdly, it is impossible for God to grant this request without ruining you. He could not make you truly happy with a heart set upon idols, even though "the outside of the cup and—platter" should be "clean." That would necessarily cut you off from the enjoyment of heaven, as disease disqualifies a man for relishing a feast. You had better never been born than be excused from loving God.

As to the second wish, viz. that God should be bound to give you the true religion on your seeking it with your *present temper*, that is, with enmity against him, with impenitence and a total rejection of Christ; or in other words, a wish to *induce* him by such seeking to change your heart; on this I remark, first, that the disappointment of this wish creates the main difficulty with every sinner who is too enlightened to suppose that an honest natural man has the true religion. The failure of this wish is the pivot on which election turns. If the natural man, under the influence of what is called *common*

grace, can induce God to change his heart, he makes himself to differ from others, and the doctrine of a discriminating election falls. If he does not induce God, election stands. And from perceiving that he cannot exert this influence on the divine mind, arises his chief complaint against God. The awakened sinner, without any proper dependance on Christ, hopes to the last that he shall induce God to change his heart, and that it will be done as the fair reward of his exertions. But this is self-righteousness in perfection. Secondly, it is inconsistent with the *character* of God to respect the prayers of an unholy man, because they are full of selfishness and self-righteousness, and are not offered with any proper dependance on Christ. The man himself stands on his own ground separated from Christ, and is not viewed by the Father through the medium of Christ. God cannot accept his prayers without setting aside the whole plan of redemption and distinctly rewarding sin. Therefore it is said, "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Your request would change the whole plan of salvation and the established mode of God's intercourse with sinners, and bring an everlasting blot upon his name.

And yet if you are ever carried through regeneration, you will first be made anxious and pray and earnestly use means, until you give up all for lost and lie dead at his feet. You never will lie dead at his feet until you have thus exhausted your own strength. This is what is called the preparatory work, and always, I suppose, more or less takes

place in the case of adults. If then you can keep from anxiety and prayer, you can probably keep from regeneration.

In regard to the third wish, viz. that God would give you the true religion without your seeking it at all, that is, while your mind is too indifferent to seek it,—while your heart is wholly engrossed by other objects; this is a wish as presumptuous as it is vain. Since the fall of man, no mind so stupid ever received the true religion, and none ever will, as we have every reason to believe. I admit that there is no *true* seeking till the heart is changed, and that this grace is in every instance bestowed on those who never *properly* sought it. But this does not lessen the unreasonableness of the careless sinner, who, with arms of rebellion in his hands, stupidly wishes God to bestow upon him an infinite blessing without an effort or an anxious feeling on his part.

Thus it appears that your four wishes are all unreasonable, and equally unreasonable are the complaints which those wishes suggest. Your murmurs against God and against the doctrines of his word, are only the selfish cavils of an interested party. You have no cause of complaint. God is in the right and you are in the wrong. Admit this conviction, I beseech you. Take all the shame and blame to yourself and clear your Maker. And under a deep conviction of the rectitude of his ways and the unrighteousnes of your own, go and cast yourself at his feet and take refuge in his boundless mercy.

SERMON XXXV.

CAN THESE BONES LIVE?

EZEK. XXXVII. 3.

And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? and I answered, O Lord God, thou knowest.

Can these bones live? When this question was put to Ezekiel he was standing in vision by a valley full of bones,—bones that were "very dry" and scattered abroad. To the eye of reason it appeared impossible that bone should ever come to its bone, that sinews and flesh should be gathered upon them, that breath should enter into them, and that they should stand "up upon their feet an exceeding great army." He saw nothing in the bones, nothing in himself, nothing in the whole creation that could produce this change. When therefore God put the question to him, "Son of man, can these bones live?" what could he answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest"? Thou only canst pro-

duce this change; thou only knowest whether it will be done.

This valley of bones represented the whole house of Israel in Babylon, dead to all hope, and most of them dead in sin; whom God intended to raise to holiness and restore to the land of their fathers, and to whom he directed the vision to be thus explained: "Ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves,—and *shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live*, and I shall place you in your own land." Placing them in their own land, was only setting them up in the world after they were made alive; their resurrection consisted in rising from the death of sin by the power of the Holy Spirit. The vision therefore illustrates the natural condition of men in general, "dead in trespasses and sins" and cut off from hope, and their resurrection to spiritual life by the power of God.

Methinks I am standing to-day on the margin of a valley full of dry bones,—the bones of my kindred, at whose death my tears have often flowed. As I bend over the remains of those dear to me and mourn the wide desolation, I perceive the bones to be very dry. I see them disjointed and scattered through the valley in ruinous disorder. While I stand fixed in grief, a whisper comes from heaven, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I start at the joyous sound. I look at the valley again. To the eye of reason such an event seems impossible. The whisper swells upon my ear, "Son of man, can these bones live?" Agitated with hope and fear, and certain on whom the event depends,

what can I answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest"?

Can these souls that are dead in trespasses and sins, ever be revived? If they cannot, they must soon sink into the eternal death. They must burn in unquenchable fire. *Can* they not be raised?—They might be formed into beings capable of inconceivable and endless enjoyment,—capable of everlasting service and praise. Precious in our eyes is their very dust. What pity that such materials should be worse than lost, and made fuel for the flames that shall consume others. It is a loss great enough to fill a world with tears. *Can* they not be raised? This question must *soon* be decided. The ground is already rocking under them. Whatever is done must be done quickly. *Can* they be raised?

Their death is their own fault. It is the death of sin,—of supreme selfishness and pride armed against the government of God, against the dying love of Christ, against the rights and interests of the universe. It is such a death as deserves eternal reprobation,—as crushes them under mountains of guilt,—as makes them odious in the sight of God, mere masses of putrefaction. Can they not be raised from this disgraceful death?

To the eye of reason I confess the case appears hopeless. As desirable as such an event is,—as distressing as it is to see our kindred lie among the slain,—sense and reason must forever despair.—Their death consists in strong opposition to life and to all the means of restoring life; and yet they can-

not be made actively alive without their own consent. Every means has been used to obtain that consent, but in vain. God has sent his own Son to die, to render it consistent for them to live and enjoy life. That Son has suffered and died and risen, and stood over them and entreated them; but they have rejected his love and turned their faces to the earth and resolved to lie in death still. He has prepared a life for them more blessed than that which they lost; he has described to them the high beatitudes of that life and the horrors of that eternal death into which they must soon plunge, until heavenly eloquence is exhausted; but like the deaf adder they have stopped their ears. He has sent many messengers to renew the entreaty, but all to no purpose. Sermons, which have been poured into their ears for twenty or thirty years, might as well have been poured into the grave. The Bible has in vain raised its authoritative voice,—in vain has sent its beseeching tones to the ear of death. Sabbaths and sacraments have returned to solicit them in vain. The heavenly Spirit has breathed through the valley; but him they have resisted and grieved away. Ministers have preached, parents have wept, Christians have prayed, God has entreated: but all to no purpose: they still love death rather than life. Every thing that heaven and earth could do in a way of means has been done, but they are still buried in the world as though this was their eternal home. All that has been done cannot bring them to pray in their families or even in their closets. All cannot bring them to raise one earnest cry for

mercy or to shed one tear for sin. They live as jocundly as though they were not undone,—as though they were not sinking into eternal fire.—They sport with death and play with damnation. They mock at the authority of God and defy his wrath. While he is looking on,—while he holds his sword to their breast,—they dare his omnipotence. That sword smites their companions by their side, but they regard it not. In the glass of a dying bed, in the glass of new opened graves, they see their own face, and straightway go away and forget what manner of persons they are. Years revolve and push them onward to the tomb, till their trembling limbs totter over the pit; but they remain as careless about their future destiny as on the day they were born. If their conscience for a moment disturbs them with anticipations of a judgment to come, instead of resorting to Christ, they resort to their inoffensive lives, or to a new course of duties, or to a denial of future punishment, or to downright infidelity. Some of them seem to think that if they can insult the threatenings of God with a joke, it will stop his approaching wrath. Many of them do not think salvation worth the pains of examining the conditions on which it is offered, by a careful study of the Scriptures. Amidst the full blaze of Gospel light, they live and grow old almost as ignorant of religion as pagans, and are ready to seize every error without examination which is calculated to quiet their conscience and quell their fears. Instead of giving "diligence to make" their "calling and election sure," they are

hurrying from amusement to amusement, while death and judgment are posting on to meet them, and on the verge of eternity are scattering every serious thought in scenes of dissipation. All this time God is warning, Christ is pleading, angels are wondering, Christians are trembling; but all in vain. What hope then remains that they will ever turn and live? Their hearts have hitherto been able to resist all means and motives; what prospect that they will not continue to resist? Instead of growing softer they are hardening every day. If they resisted yesterday they are more likely to resist to-morrow. The power of habit is growing stronger upon them every hour. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" The Spirit of God is departing, (if it has not wholly forsaken them,) and Satan is hourly entrenching himself in their hearts. What chance then remains? Certainly their chance is small, and to the eye of reason their restoration appears impossible. And yet they are looking forward to future conversion with a confidence that can risk their salvation on the issue without an anxious thought. They think God will certainly spare them though he spare not others, or they dream that they can at any time bring themselves to life. Thus they rest, while perhaps at this moment there are a thousand chances to one that they are not to "escape the damnation of hell."

Must Christians continue to live in such a valley of the slain? Must their hearts bleed forever at the daily sight of miseries which they cannot relieve? Must they always walk up and down in the

place of graves and weep over the dry bones of their kindred? What can prevent? What hope can be formed of the resurrection of a single being "dead in trespasses and sins?" "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

Must we then give up all for lost? Must we resign the whole impenitent world to everlasting despair? Yes certainly,—if God does not interpose. Yes certainly,—if he does not exert *almighty* power,—the same power that will at last call sleeping nations from the tomb. Will he exert this power for those who are now before me? I cannot tell. He has told no man. Will one of the impenitent of this assembly ever see the kingdom of God? That is a secret wrapt up in the archives of eternity. Unless God raise the dead the dead will not revive. Whether he will raise one of these I cannot tell. In respect to the *careless*, there is not the least symptom in their favor, —not a particle of evidence that they have not to spend their eternity in hell. In respect to *all* the impenitent before me, this I know, (for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,) that they will never do anything to *help* God to raise them or to *induce* God to raise them. They will do nothing but oppose till God makes them "willing in the day of" his "power." Though their anxieties and struggles and prayers are made a means in the hands of the Spirit to carry on the preparatory work, yet they themselves do not help but oppose their resur-

rection. The selfishness, pride, self-righteousness and unbelief which fill their prayers, do nothing but oppose. If God lets down an arm to raise them from death, it will be wholly self-moved. After all their cries and tears and attendance on means, (without which the preparatory work could not go on,) if he raises them to life he will be as much self-induced as though he were to convert an infidel in his sleep. Their convictions and struggles and subsequent despondency and dying to all hope from themselves, prepare them when life is restored, to see to whom they owe their salvation and how great is the debt. It is therefore in accordance with the wise and merciful purposes of God to make them anxious, to set them upon the use of means, and by the light poured upon their conscience to force them to cry for mercy. If they can keep from this anxiety and use of means, they will certainly keep from salvation. But all their anxieties and cries, though useful in other respects, do not *induce* God to change their hearts. If he does it at all he does it of his own accord, "because he delighteth in mercy." If he never performs this act,—if he lays upon them his eternal strokes,—he will be just.—They richly deserve his wrath. He is under no obligation to them. He has never bound himself to them by covenant. He will not violate the laws of justice nor any promise to mankind if he leaves every impenitent sinner in this house to perish.—For aught I know he will. For aught you know he will.

And yet he is more ready to "give the Holy Spirit

to them that ask him," than parents are to give bread to their children. If these sinners would ask aright he would certainly answer. They *ought* to do it; but they *will not* do it; and *never* will, till, *uninduced by their cries*, he makes them "willing in the day of" his "power." Whether he ever will, no mortal man can tell. And yet among all the crowd of careless sinners you cannot find one but is confident that he shall be saved,—that God will spare *him* however he deals with others, or that *he* can at any time prepare his own heart, and that he certainly will before he dies. And yet all this time the question wholly depends on the sovereign will of God. "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Let no sinner trust to his own future will. That future will depends on God.

Does this theory convert sinners into machines, or form any excuse for their deadness? No; they would be actively alive at once if they were not wickedly opposed to life. The greater that opposition the greater their guilt. But the opposition is so great that none but God will ever subdue it. In this precise thing their moral dependance lies. *It depends on God to conquer their criminal opposition to life.* That is all. They have no excuse for this opposition. They ought not to make it. But since they do, it depends on God whether to subdue it or not. They will never aid nor induce him to exert this power, they will only oppose. He is not bound by justice or promise to exert it for any individual. Whether he will do it or not is a secret wrapt up

in his own inscrutable will. The intentions of sinners to become good at a future time, have no other influence than to ruin them by delay.

When therefore I see many around me "dead in trespasses and sins," I can form no opinion respecting their future fate. The prospect is dark. If they are still stupid and prayerless, there is not a symptom in their favor. If a voice from heaven should ask me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I could only refer it back and say, "O Lord God, thou knowest." God only knows whether one of them will ever see the kingdom of heaven, or whether they will all sink together to eternal despair. He this moment sees the throne of glory where each one will reign, or the bed in hell where each one will lie. My only hope for any of them rests on his eternal purpose to raise many of our race from death,—to put life into them without their aid and in spite of their opposition. For what individuals he will do this, he must himself decide, uninfluenced by man. He is ready to hear the prayers of his people for individuals. But unless he has chosen those individuals, he will not give his people, when they pray for them, the spirit of those prayers to which the promises are made. He will himself decide the fate of all. He will have "mercy on whom he will have mercy." If men will not be good of themselves,—if they will all refuse, and oblige God to compel them,—pray give him the common right of a man, to determine whom he will compel and whom he will not. He is under no obligation to any. All deserve destruc-

tion. They whom he leaves have only their deserts. They are not injured by his free grace to others. That grace to others is none of their concern. Has he not a right to do what he will with his own? If he gives some their exact due and bestows a free gift on others, who has a right to complain? But complain who will it alters not the case. He will not alienate the rights of the Godhead for the unreasonable murmurs of rebellious worms. God *will* decide your eternal fate. He will decide in regard to each of you who are impenitent, whether he will change your heart or leave you to harden in sin till you die. If he should call out any one of you from the crowd and ask me, Can that sinner live? I could only answer, "O Lord God, thou knowest." This is all that parents can say in respect to their Christless children. Can that child of your affections live? They have nothing to answer but, "O Lord God, thou knowest."

And now, my dear hearers, do you ask me why I state these things before you? It is not to torment any of you before the time; it is with an humble hope that God may make the truths profitable to you. My wish is *to convince you that you are in his hands and to bring you to his feet.* That is the only place where any sinner ever found mercy. He is your best friend who endeavors to bring you there. Be not angry at these statements, but rather bless God that you now distinctly see where you must go for relief. This whole subject teaches you that you must go to the feet of God and there lie till he

shall lift you up; and it teaches you nothing else. O could I see you there I could hope. You have often urged your dependance on God, not as a reason to bring you to his feet, but as an excuse for indolence and stupidity. This was a strange perversion. Make no such use of this doctrine any longer. I hope that it may be blest, in the first place, to awaken your anxiety. If God intends to bring you to repentance he will first make you anxious, —he will fill you with such a sense of sin and ruin as will press from your lips strong cries for mercy. And though he will not listen to impenitent cries, yet without that previous state of anguish and supplication, he is not likely to bring you to repentance. I hope, in the second place, that this statement will awaken Christians to pray for you, and with a new sense of dependance. If God intends to save you he will probably first put a spirit of prayer for you into the hearts of some of his children, that he may convert you in answer to prayer. For though he will decide your fate himself, uninfluenced by man, yet if he intends to save you he will dictate prayers in answer to which he may confer the infinite blessing. I hope, in the third place, that this exposition may lead you to fear and reverence him on whose will your salvation depends. Certainly it *ought* to lead to this. The loose notion of dependance which you heretofore had, led you only to throw your duties from yourselves upon God. But I hope it will not be so now. After all you have heard, will you, under the plea that if you are saved God must save you

and you have nothing to do, idly turn away to other matters? Will you thus trifle with him on whom your salvation depends? With so much at stake upon his will, dare you turn your backs on him and rush after idols? Will you refuse him the homage of your prayers? Will you any longer provoke him by your unbelief and sin? Will you violate his laws and assail his throne? And all this while he is looking on? all this while his will is to decide your eternal fate? Is it prudent thus to treat an almighty Sovereign who has you in his hands? Is it safe to rush thus upon the thick bosses of his buckler? What infatuation has seized thee, O presumptuous worm? Stay, stay thy mad career. Drop those weapons from your bloody hands.—Fall down at his feet. There say, I resign myself a prisoner into thy hands, to be disposed of as thou shalt see fit.—Look to his bleeding, dying Son. Look to the interceding Priest. And then, collecting your whole soul into one effort, say, Accept that life in lieu of mine. Hear that intercession for the vilest of traitors. God be merciful to me a sinner!—Do this from the bottom of your heart and you shall live. Do this and you shall find yourself in the arms of a forgiving Parent. Do it speedily or you die forever.

SERMON XXXVI.

ARROWS SHARP IN THE HEART OF ENEMIES.

Ps. xlv. 5.

Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.

While tyrants are wading to empire through the blood of slaughtered armies, and marching to the music of a nation's groans, there *is* a Conquerer of a far different sort. He too has his arrows and his two-edged sword, and goes "forth conquering and to conquer;" but his track is not marked with desolation and wo;—his course is not proclaimed by the cries of widows and orphans. Mercy is perched upon his standard, and in his van marches salvation. He wounds but to heal, and kills but to make alive. "On his head" are "many crowns,—and his name is called, The Word of God." When the Gospel was sent forth, then this glorious Conqueror girded his sword upon his thigh, according to the prayer in our context: "Gird thy sword upon

thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things." This is a devout prayer for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in all the fulness of its blessings: and although the idea of severity to enemies may be included, and a full view of the Conqueror as here arrayed may disclose a Monarch marching into a rebellous province, reducing some to obedience and destroying others, yet the idea of mercy plainly preponderates. Although the Gospel, which is the grand weapon employed, may be "set for the fall" as well as "rising—of many," and may prove a "savor of death unto death," yet who does not know that its leading feature is mercy? To this latter view of the subject I shall confine my attention, and endeavor to celebrate the gracious triumphs of our King. I shall,

I. Examine the process of his individual conquests.

II. Contemplate the general march of the Conqueror.

I. I shall examine the process of his individual conquests.

"Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies," (that is, the enemies of *thy* kingdom,) "whereby the people fall under thee,"—fall prostrate at thy feet after the manner of vanquished foes. Several ideas are comprehended in these words, which, followed out in their proper order, will lead to a right apprehension of these individual conquests.

I. It is plainly implied that the King marches against none but enemies. This settles the previous character of all who are subdued, and of course the natural character of all mankind. The text does not confine its view to the conquest of thieves and robbers: it looks at the general extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. It does not confine its view to the reduction of pagans, unless all besides pagans are real subjects of his kingdom and heartily obedient to his laws. If you can find any in Christendom, any even among the baptised, who do not submit to his laws in heart as well as in practice, (for the heart is respected in his requirements,) you find those who, as really as pagans, have yet to be reduced to subjection to his empire. And all who have occasion to be thus reduced, are his enemies according to the text. If then you can find any with the Bible in their hands, who have not truly repented and forsaken their sins, who have not exercised a saving faith in Christ, who do not live a life of prayer, who have not heartily renounced the world, who do not love God supremely, who do not possess the spirit of martyrs, (for all these are essentially characteristic of his subjects,) you find those who still remain the enemies of Christ. "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." But "he that is not *with* me is *against* me." In a word, all who are yet to be brought into the kingdom of Christ, that is, all the world except real Christians, are his enemies.

2. The reduction of these enemies is the work of Christ. The history of all genuine conversions

is written in these words: "*Thine* arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under *thee*." Every new subject brought into his kingdom is a trophy of his conquering power. His empire is extended only by conquest. Allow that the text has reference to the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and all this follows with irresistible certainty.

3. We are now prepared to examine the process by which these conquests are made. The first inquiry is, What are these arrows by which the enemies are transfixed? Doubtless they are the same with the sword mentioned in a preceding verse.—Now the sword of Christ is represented as proceeding out of his *mouth*;* and long ago he said by a prophet, "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword,—and made me a polished shaft." "The sword of the Spirit" is expressly said to be "the word of God;" and we are told that "the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." No doubt then that the arrows which he infixes are the truths of his word. This infixing is accomplished by the agency of his Spirit, whose office work it is to "convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." In an hour when the mind is thoughtless and wandering upon the world, it is made to feel one of these

* Rev. i. 16. & xix. 15.

truths, and then another, and another still, with more or less power. The precise order is not the same in every case; but sooner or later the same truths get into every mind thus affected. The sinner is made to feel, to a degree unknown before, that there is a God who "is angry with the wicked every day;" that he himself is the creature of God sent into the world to serve him; that he has wickedly neglected the work; that he has violated the laws of God in numberless instances, in thought, word, and deed; that for his sins he is justly condemned to eternal death. By such views he cannot but be deeply affected and dismayed. The careless world pronounce him mad: but wherein is he mad? Is it madness to believe the truths of God? The things which he sees and feels are everlasting verities; and the only difference between his present and former state is, that then he did not realize the truth, now he does. Formerly he lived in unbelief, like the rest of a careless world, heedless of the things which God has spoken; now he believes them.—And who is the madman, he that can disbelieve infinite veracity, and rush on to eternity unmindful of the awful declarations of God respecting that world, or he who views things as they are?

It is a fashionable opinion among the gay, that men submit to the empire of Christ in a placid manner, without any distress or perturbation; that as religion is a pleasant service, all gloom at the entrance upon it must indicate a morbid state of the imagination. But this does not accord with the representation of the text. The latter speaks of the

heart of a rebel transfixed with arrows: and if arrows enter a heart there must be pain. And to look at the thing in its own light without a figure, how can a man wake up and find himself an enemy to God and under condemnation, and not be distressed? How can the sins of his life be laid open to his view without filling him with confusion and anguish? How can "the wrath of God," which "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness," be applied to him without producing trembling and dread? You say, he ought to repose on the mercies of God in Christ: and so he will as soon as he has fully seen his need and humbled himself for his sins. But are there no pains of sickness to be felt before he will apply to the physician? Is there no view of ruin before he will prize the grace which came "to save that which was lost?"—before he will flee to the refuge provided? Are there no bitter tears of repentance before he can be pardoned? And is it necessary to suppose that all these views are communicated in a moment? Is it not more consistent with the nature of the human mind, with facts recorded in Scripture, and with the testimony of daily experience, to suppose that the views must pass in succession, and often in slow succession? that the mind, hard and obstinate as it is, must ordinarily linger for a considerable time under a sense of guilt and ruin before it will embrace a Saviour? And is it not reasonable to suppose that one who has been so deep in guilt, will be held off a while, (like Miriam who was left to "be ashamed seven

days,")* before he is admitted to the embraces of pardoning love? It is perfectly philosophical and scriptural and agreeable to experience, that a sinner should remain a while in darkness and distress before he tastes the sweetness of forgiving mercy. And there is too much reason to fear that those who condemn these temporary glooms, and find no difficulty in reposing at once on divine mercy without a conflict or a pain, have never seen their need of mercy, and do in fact rely rather on the general clemency of God to which they feel themselves justly entitled.

But our text carries the idea farther. I have said, if arrows enter a heart there must be pain; I now add, there must be *death;* and if life succeeds, it must be by a resurrection. By these arrows the heart of Paul was pierced on the plains of Damascus; and he himself tells us the effect: "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died." The majesty and purity of God opened to his view; the strictness and extent of the divine law stood before him; his own sins rolled upon him like a dark cloud of thunder; he saw himself to be utterly condemned, utterly unable to atone for one sin, utterly ruined, helpless, and hopeless. Then it was that he died to all hope of justification by the law,—all hope of helping himself,—and pronounced himself a dead man. Then, and not till then, he lifted an eye to the Saviour,—lifted it from the bottom of the grave, and rose to a new life of hope,—rose to eternal life in him.

* Num. xii. 14.

The work which the Saviour came to accomplish was nothing less than to raise the dead. He did not come to new-model an old life, but to raise men from their graves. He came to be, in every sense, "the resurrection and the life;"—to raise to spiritual life the "dead in trespasses and sins,"—to raise to the life of hope and to eternal life those who had seen themselves to be dead in the sentence of the law, and had died to all hope of helping themselves,—and finally to raise the body from the grave. Every part of his work is a resurrection.

And now to present the whole under the figure of the text. This glorious King and Conqueror, finding a rebel in arms against him, thrusts him through with the arrows of truth, fills him with the anguish of conviction, lays him dead at his feet, and then raises him to the life of hope and to life eternal in himself. This single figure presents the whole process of supernatural conviction and conversion, and proves the reality of such a work.

Here I pause, and ask my hearers whether they have ever experienced such a change. If you have not, you have no part in Christ. This is precisely the change intended by the Saviour himself when he said, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." If you have not felt the arrows of truth penetrating your hearts, filling you with remorse and anguish and repentance, showing you the justice of your condemnation, causing you to die to all hope of recommending yourselves to God, leading you to look up from your graves to the Saviour of

sinners, and raising you to a new life in him; you may be moral and charitable to the poor, but you have no part in Christ. You still lie under condemnation, and dying thus, must sink into eternal wo. Have you then, my dear hearers, ever felt those arrows penetrating your souls, and felt them extracted by him who applied the balm of Gilead? How beautifully is this process described by the tender and classical Cowper!

> "I was a stricken deer that left the herd
> Long since: with many an arrow deep infix'd
> My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew
> To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
> There was I found by One who had himself
> Been hurt by th'archers. In his side he bore,
> And in his hands and feet the cruel scars,
> With gentle force soliciting the darts,
> He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live."

II. Let us now contemplate the general march of this divine Conqueror.

The great work of subduing a rebellious race is taken into his own hands;—a glorious truth, which, though offensive to wicked men, lays the only foundation of human hope. He gave bonds to undertake this wonderful campaign when there was none to induce him, none to speak of our miseries, none to plead in our behalf. He undertook it from no desire of fame,—with no reward in view but the pleasure of relieving the wretched and bestowing on prostrate rebels freedom and life. He undertook it in full view of the perils of the war and the many pains and scars it would cost him. The scene of the battle was not to be a single district

or kingdom, but a world. The interest at stake was the dearest interest of God and his creation.

The high conflicting parties were the strongest in the universe. The army collected to oppose this mighty King, made up of all the inhabitants of two worlds, was the greatest host that ever was marshaled since time began. The army of Xerxes was a unit to this. Against such an immeasurable host, who for ages had been entrenching themselves throughout the world, in every temple, in every school, behind every throne, in every heart, he went forth single-handed. He girded his sword upon his thigh, he mounted the chariot of his Gospel, and marched directly into the heart of Satan's empire. Wherever he came he conquered. At his approach devils fled, their temples and altars fell, their oracles grew dumb. The Roman empire, the chief seat of Satan's visible kingdom, shook to its centre, and afterwards opened to the Conqueror and fell prostrate at his feet. Wounds he carried, but the very blood he shed dissolved the strongest hold of Satan, the heart of man. He sent forth his arrows and three thousand were pricked in the heart at once. He marched through the nations, breaking down the prisons which Satan had reared to confine his wretched captives. Hundreds of millions who had been confined in dungeons from their birth, were loosed from their chains and brought forth to joyous light. Wherever he came freedom and joy sprung up around him. He marched down the ages, scattering his arrows from his quiver and bringing his enemies to his feet.

He still rides through the nations "conquering and to conquer." His arrows never miss their mark. No trumpet is sounded before him: his march is silent and unobserved by the world, but it is uninterrupted still. While the world dream that he has retired from the earth, he is extending his conquests every hour. It is the chief employment for which he lives. All the piety of the present generation in the four quarters of the globe, is the fruit of his recent conquests. Every saint on earth is a vanquished rebel, whose heart was once pierced by the shafts of his quiver. God speed thee, thou glorious Conqueror! Go on and prosper. "In thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness;" and may the blessing of millions ready to perish come upon thee.

His trophies are not wasted provinces, but prisoners set free, souls delivered from the destroyer, sighs and groans suppressed, and the sting of death extracted. These are *his* trophies; these are his spoils. The high minded spirit of chivalry celebrated the feats of disinterested knights, who roamed the kingdoms, as imagination feigned, to deliver oppressed females from enchanted castles or from the grasp of giants and genii. But how much more disinterested and benignant a Deliverer is here,—marching through the nations and rescuing the oppressed and those that have no helper, from the tyranny of Satan. "Shall the prey be taken from the mighty?" Yea "even the captives of the mighty" are "taken away and the prey of the terrible" is "delivered." O the divine benevolence of this

godlike course! Again we say, the Almighty God speed thee, thou glorious Conqueror! We will follow the wheels of his triumphal chariot, and shout as we go, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" to redeem a wretched race: "hosanna in the highest."

How many millions has this benevolent King subdued, from Abel to the present day. How many even of us. How many of our dear children and friends. Has not some of us seen a parent or a brother delivered from eternal slavery and ruin? Has never a parent among us seen a child dispossessed and restored to his right mind? In the hour when that parent stood with his child to thank his Deliverer, did he not say again, "Hosanna to the Son of David: blessed is he that cometh" to save our children from eternal death?

But the most glorious triumphs of this divine Conqueror are reserved for ages yet to come, which the voice of prophecy and the signs of the times declare to be now at the door. His hand is brushing away the papal kingdoms, and dropping spiritual Babylon, like a millstone, into the mighty deep. His shafts will shortly pierce the vail that hides from the seed of Abraham the glories of their Messiah; and some of you, I trust, will live to see that long lost race restored to the land of their fathers. His hand will break the Mahometan powers, when they assemble on the mountains of Israel to disinherit the restored tribes, and will thus put a final end to that delusion which has long enchained one-tenth part of the human race. His bow

will bring down many nations which are now kneeling to gods "of wood and stone." His arrows will pierce the priests of Brahm and Boodha, and lay the dervises of Turkey at his feet. They will sing his triumphs on the banks of the Ganges and in the deserts of Sahra. They will celebrate his victories on the frozen beach of Kamtschatka and in the sultry regions of Congo and Peru. The mosques of Mecca and the pagodas of Hindostan shall be converted into temples of the living God: and the enemy who deceived the whole world, ejected from all his dominions on earth, shall be confined to his prison for a thousand years. For a thousand years shall he who hung on Calvary reign over this restored world, with all his enemies under his feet, with none to question his messiahship, with none to deny his godhead. At the end of this period he will triumph once more over "Gog and Magog;" and then, as the last act of his dominion on earth, will judge the world. And when he shall have committed all his enemies to prison, and shall be returning, at the head of his redeemed Church, towards heaven's gate,—going home from all his wars and victories, covered with scars and honors,—how will they shout his triumphs as they ascend: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." And when they have con-

ducted him to his throne, they will pour the eternal strain "as the sound of many waters:" "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." And the whole sanctified creation will send forth the loud response: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever."

My dear hearers, fall down at the feet of this divine Conqueror, and submit to his empire, and venture your eternal all upon his mediation. If you refuse, know you that he has other arrows with which to reach your heart. "God shall shoot at" you "with an arrow; suddenly shall" you "be wounded." They that will not have this King to reign over them, shall be brought forth and slain before him. He will reign till all his enemies are made his footstool. His first advent, with all the benignity which attended it, was foretold in terms terrible to the wicked. "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple.—But who may abide the day of his coming?—Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." And that coming in his kingdom which is yet *future*, is predicted in language equally alarming. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?—Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like

him that treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the wine press alone:—for I will tread them in my anger and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." Terrible things are to be accomplished upon the wicked, which will cause men's hearts to fail for fear. "And the kings of the earth and the great men and the rich men and the chief captains and the mighty men and every bond man and every free man," shall hide "themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and" shall say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

SERMON XXXVII.

SALVATION TAKEN INTO GOD'S OWN HANDS.

JER. XXXI. 31–34.

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; (which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord.) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and *will* be their God, and they *shall* be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know ye the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

It is sometimes useful to contemplate the duties which devolve on us as *agents*, and sometimes the hopes which arise from the *agency of God*. To the latter of these subjects our text naturally directs our attention.

The old covenant referred to in this passage, was that which was made with the Hebrew nation at

Sinai. It was the covenant of grace couched under types; types which had the "shadow of good things to come," but "not the very image" nor the substance "of the things," and could never "make the comers thereunto perfect." Besides, it was in no sense an absolute, but in every sense a conditional covenant; the agency of God not being pledged for those supplies of the Spirit which would ensure a fulfilment of its conditions. In this respect it resembled the law. It is added as a consequence of all this, "which covenant they broke." Though it was sent forth from among the glories of the burning mount, while Sinai quaked under the weight of the incumbent God and the earth trembled beneath his feet,—"which covenant they broke." But it pleased God to promise a new dispensation of his covenant in the latter day, not indeed exempt from conditionality as addressed to agents, but accompanied with effectual power. In this new dispensation he brings out to view his own agency upon the heart and takes the salvation of his people into his own hands, and engages to accomplish it himself. The tenor of this covenant is more distinctly stated in the next chapter: "They *shall* be my people and I *will* be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me forever; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me."—Had only a covenant of works been held out to the world, suspending the salvation of men on their

perfect obedience; or had a covenant been proposed which offered pardon, without engaging the spiritual influences necessary to a fulfilment of its conditions,—a covenant which offered pardon and yet suspended salvation on the unassisted or unsecured exertions of men, not a child of Adam would ever have reached the kingdom of heaven. Both of these covenants have been tried; the one with sinless man in Eden, the other with sinning men at Sinai: and although the *Spirit* was granted to the nation of Israel, it was because to *Abraham* had been made the promise of a holy seed, and "the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after," could not "disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." And blessed be God, the covenant that was made with Abraham is still in force and is extended to the Christian Church. It will be my object to show,

I. That according to the plan of grace revealed in the Gospel, God has taken the work of salvation into his own hands;

II. That this circumstance lays the only foundation of human hope.

I. According to the plan of grace revealed in the Gospel, God has taken the work of salvation into his own hands. The great design originated in the mind of God. In the ages of eternity it arose out of his own self-moving goodness, without the counsel of any creature,—without the intercession of any creature,—without respect to the merits of any creature. It was his own purpose,—his own fa-

vorite choice,—induced by nothing but a regard to his own glory and compassion for a ruined world. Having conceived the design, it was he that prepared the means of its execution. He organized the whole plan without the counsel or solicitation of any creature. Eternal ages before creatures had existence, the covenant of redemption between the Sacred Persons was formed, in which every circumstance relating to the salvation of the world was settled. From the resources which were found in the ever-blessed Trinity, the means of atonement and redemption were derived. The Second Person stood forth and offered himself to die in a human form to expiate human guilt. The offer was accepted, and in return a numerous seed were promised him, whose names were "written in the book of life." The plan of redemption thus settled, these lower worlds were formed. Man was placed on the earth. He fell. Immediately an intimation of the great purpose was made to him. The design was still further disclosed during the lapse of following ages. It was known on earth that God would redeem his people; but so far from man's being consulted in regard to this design, he knew not the means nor the manner of its accomplishment. In the fulness of time the Son of God appeared on earth "to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and by once offering himself "to bear the sins of many," he brought in "everlasting righteousness" and "perfected forever them that are sanctified." He arose from the dead for their justification, and in his own release from the sins he had borne, re-

ceived the seal of their acquittal and salvation. All this was done by God, independently of creatures. And now the charge of applying to the promised seed the benefits of redemption, was committed to Christ, who, with the consent of the Father, sent out the Holy Spirit to bring invitations to a universal world, and to subdue as many as the Father had given him. The work of enlightening the world by the preaching of the Gospel, was taken into the hands of the blessed Trinity, who employed in the work such human instruments as wisdom saw fit; but it was God and not man who undertook to provide that the Gospel should be preached to every nation under heaven. It was the blessed Trinity who created the Christian Church, and undertook the charge of it, and settled the point that it should be supported and enlarged, until its overflowing glory should fill the world. The management of the Church and all her interests,—her preservation, advancement, and final triumph,—the whole has God himself provided for without the counsel of creatures. His purpose is fixed and will not change. She shall live; she *shall* be enlarged; the gates of hell *shall not* prevail; her overflowing glory *shall* fill the earth as the waters fill the sea. In like manner God has taken into his own hands the salvation of every individual of his elect. It belongs to him to awaken the conscience, which never would be done if not done by him. It belongs to him to convince of sin, which never would be done if not done by him. It belongs to him to subdue the resistance which the heart is sure to make to the calls of the Spirit,—

resistance which, if he did not subdue it, would forever prevail. And after he has overcome the sinner by superior strength and changed the heart of stone to flesh, it belongs to him to carry on the work of sanctification. This also he has taken into his own hands. It is his province to subdue the remaining corruptions, to deliver from the wiles of Satan and the snares of the world, to clear all obstacles from the Christian's path and to bear him in his arms all the way to heaven. The work is all the Lord's,—undertaken for his own glory,—undertaken from love exhaustless and invincible, and as the Lord liveth it will be accomplished.

II. That God has taken the work of delivering his people into his own hands, is the only foundation of human hope. This doctrine of divine agency and human dependance, though it is opposed by all that is proud in man, by all his love of independence, by all his hatred of divine government, is yet one of the sweetest doctrines of the Christian system. While the world complain that their salvation is dependent on the will of God, they may be very sincere, but really they know not what they do: for they murmur against that which is the only foundation of human hope. Had not God taken the salvation of men into his own hands, to begin, to carry on, and to perfect it according to his sovereign pleasure, not a fallen creature would ever have reached the kingdom of heaven. There is not a Christian on earth who could have atoned for his own sins, or conceived the wonderful plan of atonement by the death of an incarnate God. Had not

God contrived and executed this plan, no provision could have been made for the salvation of men. There is not a Christian on earth who could have secured the privilege of being born and brought up under the light of the Gospel, had not God ordered his lot in this manner. Not a Christian on earth would ever have awakened himself from the slumbers of sinful repose,—would have poured upon his own conscience the convincing light of truth, would have subdued his own resistance and translated himself from darkness into marvellous light. The best Christian on earth, with all his attainments, would never overcome another sin,—would never gain another triumph over the world,—would never demolish another idol,—would never escape another snare of Satan, but for the power of God. Sustaining the combined assaults of earth and hell, what can he do? An infant puling in its mother's arms, might as well attempt to hurl the sun from his orbit and turn all the angels out of heaven, as a poor feeble creature, in his own strength, to overcome two worlds with his own house divided against itself. His only hope is in God. At what time he is afraid he can only trust in his eternal rock. Surrounded by armies stronger than he, with all their weapons pointed at his heart, like Jehosaphat he cries out to God for aid. Inclosing in his own bosom a host of rebels, constantly disposed to mutiny and to tumult, with no check upon them but guards which are furnished from heaven, what could he do if the heavenly aid were withdrawn? Beset from without and from within, he must soon

be swallowed up if the God of his salvation did not appear for him. Finding every inch of ground disputed by the enemy, and his own mind revolting from the contest, what hope can he have but in the God of the armies of Israel? Well, let the heavenly powers aid him to prostrate long ranks of the foe;—let him a thousand times shout victory in his passage, until he arrives on the very confines of heaven;—let heaven with all the splendor of its glory be disclosed to his aged eyes, and the songs of seraphs fall upon his withered ear;—let then the heavenly aid desert him,—and from the threshold of glory,—from the vision of the Lamb he would retreat, and, urged by the malignity of his own heart, would plunge into eternal darkness and blasphemy.

The Christian who feels his own weakness, and discerns the number and power of the enemy, will resort to this delightful truth as the only ground of hope, "*The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord;*" and a thousand times will he say, with an eye lifted to heaven and fixed as marble, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him." Knowing that his case is desperate unless God plucks him from the midst of a thousand deaths; perceiving that an attempt in his own strength to break through all the difficulties between him and heaven is altogether hopeless; sensible that he cannot take a single step alone,—that without Christ he can do nothing; he finds it sweet to lay his soul over on God,—by a distinct and deliberate act to deliver into the hands of Christ all that he holds

dear for time and eternity, and to commit to him every part of his salvation. Sweet is the act of taking the glorious perfections of God for the pledges and agents of his salvation,—to reach out and take hold of omnipotence,—to feel a sense which it is not easy to express, but which may be indistinctly signified by saying, he feels *imbosomed in God*, and *sheltered there from every danger and enemy*.

That God has taken the salvation of individuals into his own hands, will excite no uneasiness except in those who would rather trust themselves than God,—who would rather reign themselves than that God should reign. But remove from real Christians this foundation, and all their hopes and efforts will sink into motionless despair. The only encouragement they have to "work out" their "own salvation," is that "God—worketh in" them. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

From this doctrine is also drawn all our encouragement in relation to the interests of the general Church. Who shall protect her from all her enemies? Every pious minister and every Christian yields the point, and concludes that if God does not support his own cause in the world, he must sit down in tears and give up all for lost. When we look abroad into the streets and see them filled with pollution,—with reeling animals that spew the name of God from their drunken lips; when we see the mixed multitude driving furiously after the world,

without a care for God or their souls; the most affecting events, the most solemn judgments unable to rouse them to a serious thought, when we behold those who profess the name of Christ buried deep in the world as those who have been long dead, —with no seeming care for the kingdom of him who purchased them with his blood; when we behold the ministration of the word produce no effects, and not a soul under all the pleadings of divine love moved to inquire the way to heaven; the eye of benevolence, filled with tears, looks round and inquires, *Is there no redress?* The heart of benevolence, bleeding at every pore and trembling for the ark of God, can seize on nothing to sustain its hopes but the blessed truth held out in the text.— The work of saving men is God's own work. The cause of religion is God's own cause. I know that not another soul will ever be converted in this congregation unless it be accomplished by the power of God. After human efforts have spent themselves to no purpose, this one consolation is left: the work of saving these poor perishing souls who are going down to destruction from our land by millions,— the work of preserving religion in this congregation,—is taken into God's own hands. There we leave it; easing our bosoms with a long sigh, there we leave it.

Come hither ye pious parents, who anxiously look on the children of your love, whom you have brought into a state of depravity and condemnation, but whom you know that you cannot restore: come, bring them and leave them here. After all your

tender concern what will become of them after death,—after all your prayers and tears and discouragements,—bring them in your arms and leave them here. You and your whole families may here repose. Will that darling child be saved? You cannot tell. You exceedingly desire its salvation, but you know that you cannot save it. *Will that child be saved?* your beating heart again inquires. The decision of this question is reserved for infinite wisdom and love. You have confidence in God that he will do right. You love him better than you do your child. You put the work of saving your children over upon him and calmly resign them into his hands. Do you not now feel a substantial peace in reflecting that God has taken the whole work of saving men into his own hands? While your children are clustering around you, and you are regarding them with a tender tear, say, Christian parent, would you for a thousand worlds change this blessed truth?

Come hither ye pious ministers, who seem to labor in vain and spend your strength for nought,—who often look around on the people of your charge and of your heart, and know that you shall soon meet them at the bar of God, and yet see most of them buried in the world and sin: come hither, after all your distresses and discouragements,—after your anxious days and restless nights; come, for here a little light begins to dawn;—it brightens,—it breaks upon the soul with glorious effulgence. The work of succeeding your ministry and saving the people committed to your care, is taken into

God's own hands. It is his own work; it is his own cause: with him you may safely leave it.

Come hither ye pious and expanded souls who bear upon your hearts the general interests of the Church,—who have been long praying for the kingdom of Christ to come: here you may settle and rest. The work of preserving and enlarging the Church and consummating her glory, is taken into God's own hands. He who set up this object without consulting the wishes or opinions of men,—who has placed his heart upon it as his own favorite interest, as the chosen means of spreading his glory before the inhabitants of all worlds,—who for this purpose created and redeemed, preserves and governs the earth,—he will take care of the Church, and as sure as he is possessed of omnipotence, will bring to its aid sufficient strength to advance it to perfection and glory.

Come hither ye doubting Christians, who are overwhelmed with fear for your own safety,—who tremble before your spiritual enemies, and often anticipate an eternal train of evils: come and rest your anxieties on the covenant of God, the only, the all sufficient ground of hope. God has taken into his own hands the salvation of his people. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel:—*I will* put my law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts, and *will be* their God, and they *shall be* my people;—for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more." When I contemplate this promise, "*I will* put my law in their inward parts,—and *will be* their God, and they *shall be* my people," I am pre-

pared to say, *There lies enclosed the last hope of an expiring world.* I approach nearer to it; I gaze upon it; I hear it say again, "I *will* be their God and they *shall* be my people;" my mind whispers to itself, *In that promise is embosomed the only hope on which my trembling soul relies. It may be that God will look upon me.* I fix my eyes on the heavens: *Will God be pleased to undertake for me?* I read the text again: I put my life in my hands and cast myself at his feet, pouring out this sum of all my hopes, "Lord, if thou *wilt* thou *canst* make me clean."

Here also is the only hope of unrenewed sinners. Come hither ye mixed multitude of impenitent men, and contemplate the only chance which remains for your salvation. Unless that God whom you have made your enemy by wicked works, undertakes for you, all heaven and earth cannot save you. Unless that God whom you daily disobey, to whom you refuse to cry for relief,—unless he in mercy to your poor perishing souls, begins and carries on and completes your salvation, you are undone for eternity. Will you any longer treat your only helper with so much neglect and abuse? Remember that you are in his hands. One frown from him and you are plunged into eternal wo; one smile from him and you live forever. O realize your condition. Hasten to cast yourselves at his feet. "Seek—the Lord while he may be found; call—upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Amen.

SERMON XXXVIII.

ABRAHAM'S STEWARD.

GEN. xxiv. 49.

And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.

Notwithstanding the awful destruction of the antedeluvian world, a second general apostacy, about the time of the birth of Abraham, had covered the earth with darkness and threatened to bury the last remains of true religion. On this account God separated Abraham from his father's house, in Haran of Mesopotamia, and removed him to the land of Canaan, in order to preserve a distinct and holy race. Nahor, the brother of Abraham, still remained in Haran, and retained in his family, with some impure mixtures, the worship of the true God. Among his sons was Bethuel, the father of Laban and of Rebekah.

When Abraham had grown old and approached the time of his death, both his pious and parental

anxieties were engaged to provide a wife for Isaac, who, instead of seducing him to idolatry, would strengthen him in religion. Such a one he could not find among the inhabitants of Canaan; and besides, it was not proper to mingle the holy seed with the proscribed descendants of Ham. His eyes were therefore turned to the family of his brother Nahor. He called the steward of his house and bound him by an oath not to take a wife for Isaac of the daughters of Canaan, but to go into Mesopotamia, and bring thence one of the posterity of Nahor. Having received this commission, the steward took ten of his master's camels, and servants to attend him, and commenced his journey. When he approached the city of Haran, he earnestly prayed God to prosper the enterprise and to point out the person designed for his master's wife. In answer to his prayer, Rebekah, the grandaughter of Nahor, a virgin of great beauty, came forth to meet him, and was made known to him as the one intended by heaven. The good man was deeply affected and "bowed down his head and worshipped," and said, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth." The news flew to the house of Bethuel that Abraham's servant was at the well without the city, and Laban hasted to bring him and his attendants into the house. And when meat was set before him, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my errand." He then gave an account of Abraham's family, of the great wealth which God had given him, of the object of his jour-

ney, and how Rebekah had been designated by a sign from heaven as the mother of the chosen seed; and then concluded his address in the words of our text: "And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." They had received all the information they could expect, —information abundantly confirmed by the extensive fame of Abraham. They knew him to be the favorite of heaven, chosen for the father of the faithful. What need then of delay? To have put the question aside without taking it into immediate consideration, or to have sent the servant back without an answer, would have been an affront to the heir of an excellent and noble family. An explicit and immediate answer was demanded, and an explicit and immediate answer was given.

Let us apply this piece of history to illustrate Gospel truth.

The union between Christ and the Church is frequently represented by that between husband and wife. They are united in the tenderest affection, —in sympathies ineffable; each feeling exquisitely the joys and sorrows of the other. When she sees him in the garden or on the cross, how does she sit and weep her life away. And how does she awake to rapture at those events which give him to see of the travail of his soul. On the other hand, whatever favors are done to her he accepts as done to himself; and whoso toucheth her toucheth the apple of his eye. They are united in a marriage covenant, in which he has engaged to provide

for her as long as he lives, and she has promised to forsake all others and cleave to him. Like husband and wife their desires are one, their happiness is one, their trials are one, their interest is one. Like a wife she bears her husband's name and honors, and is in affectionate subjection. And like a bridegroom he has gone to prepare a place for her, and when he has made it ready he will come again and receive her to himself.

If then the marriage union and that in particular between Isaac and Rebekah, may be considered an emblem of the union between Christ and believers, the embassy of Abraham's steward may illustrate the work of Gospel ministers. These ought to imitate the frank and honest zeal of this pious servant. They should tell their errand with all possible despatch, and should insist on an immediate and unwavering answer. This is *my* duty. "And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me."

But you ask, what is the treatment expected? I answer, the same that was expected in the case before us. Had Rebekah feigned a consent without actually forming the connexion, she would not have dealt kindly and truly with the family of Abraham: And Christ does not ask for a false profession, or a mere outward service, or a service extorted by anguish of conscience or fear of punishment, but one proceeding from cordial love. Rebekah and her family would not have treated Isaac kindly and truly had she been given to another, the decided enemy of Abraham's house. This would have been adding

injury to neglect. And how is the Saviour grieved when sinners reject the tenderest overtures of his friendship, and join themselves to Satan and the world. The kindness which was demanded by Abraham's steward was that Rebekah should go with him and become the wife of Isaac: and the kindness which I entreat you to show to my Master is, that you would join yourselves to him in love and in an everlasting covenant, and intrust yourselves to his honor and protection. By all the love and truth which he has displayed, he has given you abundant reason to confide in him, and it is reasonable that you should trust him for time and eternity. He has been at vast expense to redeem you, and you ought to consent to be redeemed. You ought eagerly to grasp the provisions which the tears and blood of Calvary were expended to purchase for you.

But you who are not wedded to Christ will have many objections against all this. And that these objections may appear in all their strangeness, let us put them into the mouth of Rebekah on the occasion before us.

Suppose her to say, You describe indeed the beauties of the country and the virtues of your master; but I have never seen either. Just so unbelief calls in question all the realities of another world. But let me reply to her. Though you have never *seen* either Canaan or Isaac, yet eye-witnesses of unquestionable veracity have told you of their existence and their excellence. But if you doubt, go and see for yourself; and if you are disappointed, then you may return. So say I to you. Thousands

who have tasted that the Lord is good, and by faith have been assured of the realities of another world, have testified of these things. But if you believe them not, come and see for yourselves; and if you are not satisfied, you may then return.

Suppose her further to object; How shall I forsake the favorite walks of my youth; the trees, the garden, the fields, which are endeared by so many tender recollections? And how shall I leave my friends in whose bosom I have so long reposed? Yes, these you must leave; but far more lovely scenes and dearer friends await you. Go, and you will never wish to return. And may I not say to those whose heart-strings twine around the present world, Go, and you will never wish to return. Angels will be more pleasant companions than any you renounce. The happiness of religion will far exceed the pleasures you abandon. And the splendors of the New-Jerusalem will surpass all that you leave on earth.

Aye, she replies, you say I shall never wish to return, and this is the very reason why I am unwilling to go; for how shall I abandon all my favorite objects forever? And so men have been heard to say, I have but one objection to setting out in religion; I fear I shall never be disposed to return. But will you not be free agents still, and empowered to return if you please? And if you are not disposed, will it not be because you are happier in the condition you have found?

Suppose her still to object; The way is long, and obstructed by rivers and sandy deserts, and ex-

posed to robbers and savage beasts. True, the way is long; but a much longer way have men often trodden in quest of the objects of avarice and ambition. The way is long, but the happiness which lies at the end will abundantly recompense your pains. Though obstructions are in the way, they are not insurmountable; and though there are dangers, yet behold the servants of Isaac sent to guard you safe to his mother's tent. Go, and the Lord God of Abraham shall attend you. And look ye not at the length and difficulties of the way to heaven. Greater hardships are you daily enduring in the service of the world. Harder is the way of transgressors than the way of wisdom. Sinners take more pains to get to hell than Christians do to obtain the heavenly crown. And if you talk of danger, far greater are the dangers of staying behind. And behold a faithful band of angels sent to protect you home. And the arm of Abraham's God will be your defence.

Do I hear her say, I fear I shall grow weary of the way, and have longings after home, and return, and be a derision to my acquaintance, and bring dishonor upon Isaac? Away with such pretences. If you had any regard for Isaac's honor you would not disgrace him by such frivolous excuses. And if you loved him as much as this objection would seem to imply, you would break through every hazard to meet him. How often do we hear people refuse to set out in religion for fear they shall not persevere, and so bring dishonor upon Christ; as though to remain his enemies was the best way to

show him respect, and as though they really avoided his service out of concern for his honor. It is all evasion and pretence.

But I hear her say, I am unworthy of so great and good a man, and it is impossible that he is sincere. Be it so that you are unworthy, yet if he is not sincere, what means this company of servants and camels sent five or six hundred miles? What mean these ear-rings and bracelets and jewels, the pledges of his love? And if, unhappy sinners, Christ is not sincere, what means the host of servants sent to invite you? What means the accompanying train of bibles and churches and sabbaths and sacraments and effusions of the Spirit? What mean all your temporal mercies? What mean his sweat, his tears, his blood?

But none of these objections did Rebekah make. Nor these nor any others did it become her to make. It was her duty and her interest to accompany the servant to Canaan. It was the express will of God, as revealed to Abraham, and more particularly to the steward at the well of Haran. And why should she not obey? She was not solicited to form a union with a bad man. Isaac was every way worthy of her affection. She was not invited to mix with strange blood. Isaac was her near kindred, and as such had a prior claim. She was not sought for one of the cursed descendants of Ham, but for the heir of all the promises. She was invited to become one of the children of Abraham, and to share in all the blessings promised to his house. She was not invited to unite her destinies with an

obscure and ignoble family, but with one which God by his favor had distinguished from all the families of the earth,—one on which angels attended,—which was visited by the Lord of glory,—one under the care and management and laws of the God of heaven. She was invited to habitations illumined by divine revelation, to share in the devotions of sacrifice and the benefits of circumcision. She was not invited to the dreary deserts of Arabia, but to the rich and well watered vales of Canaan, which God had selected from all other countries, to honor and to bless and to put his name there. She was not solicited to form an alliance with poverty. Isaac was a wealthy prince. She was not sought as a servant, but to be the partner of all his joys and cares, of his riches and honors,—to receive his respectful attentions, and to move the most delicate sympathies of his heart. The overture was not prompted by a fit of passion, but by deliberate purpose. She was not invited to a temporary union, untill the fickleness of fancy should wander to another object, but to a connexion as durable as life. She was selected from all the women of the earth. There were many daughters of Canaan fair and more noble, among whom he might have made his choice. But he passed by them all and set his love on her. He had taken much pains to obtain her, and had shewn her great respect by sending a company of servants, with valuable presents, five or six hundred miles. And after all had she refused to return with them, she would not have dealt kindly and truly with their master. Had she

rejected this offer, such another she never would have received. She must have connected herself with one of the heathen of the country. And what could she have expected from him? Rich he might have made her, but he could not have made her happy. He might have brought her into miserable thraldom to his false gods, but he could not have given her the blessings of Abraham. She was not unwise enough to make such a choice. She went with the servants of Isaac. She became a mother in Israel; and generations then unborn have long blessed her name.

My dear hearers, when you look at this case you cannot but see how wise it was in Rebekah to make the choice she did. But greater reasons urge you to connect yourselves with the spiritual Isaac. He has sent his servants to woo you with overtures the most tender and the most sincere. In delivering their message they would approach you with all the meekness of love, having no other object in view than the interest of you and their Master; an office of kindness which methinks ought not to give offence. Permit me therefore to deliver my message freely.

I am come to woo you for Christ. It is the will of God that you should go with me and become "the bride, the Lamb's wife." I do not ask you to accompany me to a land of darkness and drought, but to the charming scenes of Zion,—to a country well watered with the river of salvation,—to the bright fields of heaven,—to the glories of the New-Jerusalem. This is the blessed habitation which

the Bridegroom has gone to prepare for you; and he has sent ministers and angels to invite and conduct you home. Will you accompany us to Canaan and become the children of Abraham? I have not come to solicit you for a wicked prince, but for the brightness of the Father's glory, the favorite of heaven, the heir of all the promises. I have come to invite you to unite your destinies with a family which the God of heaven delighteth to honor; to live under the laws of the Eternal King; to partake of the privileges of the Church, the vision of holy objects, the fruition of heavenly pleasures; and to inherit all the good which God has spoken concerning Israel. It is not a stranger that solicits your love, but one of your near kindred; not of another race, but one who has human nature,—who has eaten and drunk and wept in this miserable world. Be not afraid of him, he is your brother. His heart is the seat of all that is tender. His honor and his love will secure you the gentlest treatment. You are not invited to the embraces of poverty and want, (as those imagine who suppose religion a joyless thing:) your proposed Husband is the Heir of all things, and commands all the treasures of the universe. You are not addressed by one of ignoble blood. He is the Son of the immortal God. He is the King of angels. Cherubim and seraphim are his humble relations. And yet he would raise you from the depths of infamy to be his glorious bride. By such a union with God's own Son, you would become the children of God. What are the children of earthly kings to this? He wishes you not

for menial servants, but for the partners of all his joys, the objects of his tenderest sympathies,—his bride, and if you would be nearer still, the members of his body,—the apple of his eye. This is no fit of passion, suddenly raised and as suddenly to subside. He has loved you with an everlasting love: and should you consent, his love would never change. No divorce, nor death itself, which dissolves all other nuptial bands, would separate you from his love. Come away, for he hath set his love on you and chosen you out of all the worlds that he hath made. He might have selected other planets, but this alone has tasted redeeming grace. He might have set his heart on the recovery of fallen angels, who were of a nobler race, and wooed him a bride in the chambers of hell. But all others forsaking, he hath made you the enviable object of his choice. Come away for he hath set his love on you.

Great are the pains which he has taken to obtain you. For this he lighted up the sun, moon, and stars. For this he founded the earth, and in the waters laid the beams of his chambers. For this he has taken all the angels into his service. And O for this was Calvary stained with blood. He saw his bride dying in a loathsome prison. She had fled from him and was perishing for her crimes. Yet in his forgiveness and pity he redeemed her with his own life. And because she still rejected him, he has been sending his servants to entreat her, and with them has sent many earnests of his love. And here still she sits, resisting his solicitations, and insensible to all his astonishing condescension. And

such another offer she will never have again. Well then, go and join yourself to a heathen husband.—And now what are you the better? What can Satan and the world do for you? They may promise fair but they never perform. Can they wipe the tear of grief? Can they cleanse the soul from guilt? Can they support in a dying hour?

And now what hinders? "All things are ready, come unto the marriage." The Father's consent is obtained. But for this the Bridegroom must shed his sacred blood. He has himself made all the provisions necessary? If you want a wedding garment, his righteousness has wrought one. The marriage supper is all prepared, and nothing is wanting but your consent. It will grieve me to carry back word that you will not come.

I have told my errand: "And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." I come in the name of a Master whose honor will not brook delay. You have his message, and have heard all that you can hear from him.—The case, as plain as it ever will be, now lies before you. You are to expect no greater light and no different means. The light and means which you have are sufficient to do all that light and means can do. For if you will not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead. You now know, as well as you can hope to know in this world, what immeasurable wealth belongs to Christ, and that all this wealth would be yours. You know also that you

are deeply in debt, and that without this relief you must perish in prison. You have all the information you can expect respecting his character, and can determine now as well as at another time whether you can like it or not. If you cannot, why there is an end to the matter, for his character will not change. If you can, be ingenuous and declare it. It requires no long time for consideration, nor should the consideration be postponed. The magnitude of the question and the earnestness with which he urges his suit, both forbid delay. If ever he will be worthy he is worthy now. If then you ever intend to receive him, consent at once. But if you never intend it, frankly inform him, that he may know what he has to do. In every point of view he has a right to an immediate answer. Ah, my dear hearers, when your interest required his decision, did he hesitate thus? As soon as your necessities were known, he flew on the wings of love to your relief. He did not waver a moment. As soon as the question was put, Will you shed your blood to save your bride from death? he eagerly replied, Yes, to the very last drop. She has wronged me much, but I will die for her, and pardon her with my dying breath. Amidst all the mighty difficulties and sufferings through which he passed, not a single doubt ever seized his mind. And now will you hesitate when he asks for some returns? Sirs, my Master would know what you intend to do. God and holy angels are looking down on this assembly to see what answer you will give to their Beloved who makes this overture. And while God and angels are looking

on, I will go through the house and ask you one by one what answer I shall carry back to him that sent me. My *aged* friends, "If *you* will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me." Shall I wait for your decision? Will the *middle-aged* prepare their answer? Will *you* deal kindly and truly with my Master or will you not? If you would wish for a moment to deliberate, I will go to the youth. My dear *young* friends, are there any of you who will consent to go and be eternally united to the Lord Jesus Christ? Methinks I hear some secretly replying, "Yes, *I* will go." Well, come along, blessed youth, as many as will, and be assured of a kind reception. Shall I now return to heads of families, and let them know that some of those who have not lived half as long as they, are determined not to wait for another invitation? And why should *you* stay behind? I am indeed unwilling to leave you. Already have you delayed too long. For thirty, forty, and fifty years has this affectionate offer been pressed upon you, and yet you have formed no decision. You *must not* delay any longer. Answer me then to this explicit question; Will you become united to Christ and share in a blessed immortality, or will you, with Dives, lie down in everlasting burnings? Eternity hangs on the decision. Your soul is at stake. O decide. Will you be happy or miserable forever?

After all, I fear there are some in different parts of the house who have not yet given their answer. It is distressing to leave them thus. I will go through the house once more and apply again for

their decision. Suffer me to turn to those on my *right* hand. Sirs, I have a commission from the Lord to put this solemn question to you; Will you deal kindly and truly with my Master and live, or will you refuse and die? And are there not some more on my *left* who will consent to go and be united to Christ? The Saviour is waiting for your reply. O do not weary out his patience and provoke him to leave you and seek his bride among another people. Trifle with him no longer. For know, the Son of God, with all his condescension, is conscious of his dignity still. He knows it is an infinite stoop in him to *look* on you. He knows what returns he ought to receive. And ere long he will assert his rights and vindicate his injured honor. They who will not take shelter in his bosom, shall soon feel the weight of his almighty arm. His persuasive invitations will turn to angry thunders; and then ten thousand voices will proclaim, "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

When Abraham's servant received his commission, he said, "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me." And Abraham said, "If the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath." Whether therefore you will hear or whether you will forbear, I humbly hope that I have delivered my own soul.

SERMON XXXIX.

THE WATCHMAN.

EZEK. XXXIII. 7, 8.

So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand.

Then the office of a watchman is responsible and solemn indeed, and they who sustain it *must carry* to the ears of sinners those denunciations of death which the word of God contains. The text imports that they will be tempted to keep back the evil tidings, for fear of distressing and offending those they love. And such temptations are often felt. It is no pleasure to a tender watchman to excite pain and complaint. It was no comfort to the prophet that he was forced to be a man of strife; and sometimes he was pressed so hard by frowns and rebuffs, that he sunk under them and said, he would no more speak in the name of the Lord.

It is impossible for a minister to deliver the whole message of God without giving offence to some. And the reason is, that the character and destiny of sinners are such as they cannot bear to hear described. The truth is, that heaven and earth are at variance. The world is not as it was made, nor as it ought to be. It has revolted from God; and God esteems the character of unregenerate men as bad, and is as angry with them, as any watchman ever represented. Else why is every page of his word filled with solemn accusations and complaints, which call forth resentments against this book more than against any other book on earth? Why is it that every eye, as soon as it is opened, sees this controversy to be as real as the existence of God? Why was this beautiful paradise changed to a vale of tears, to be chastened with griefs and shaken with tempests? Why did a view of divine wrath against the world press out the bloody sweat of Gethsemane? Did not the agonies of Calvary show that God was angry with men? If all these proofs fail to strike, one is at hand which, one would think, could not be resisted. Why is it that when sinners die, God puts them into an eternal hell? Does this evince no anger, or anger less dreadful than the watchmen represent? It evinces anger greater than human tongue ever described or human heart conceived. Settle it then that heaven and earth are at variance, and that God has a controversy with men.

Under these circumstances he sends forth his ambassadors, (whom by another figure he calls

watchmen,) to assert his claims, to justify his ways to men, to convince them that he is right and they are wrong, at the same time to make overtures for reconciliation and to press the invitations of heavenly mercy. Now some sinners seem to expect that these ambassadors, instead of maintaining the honor of their king, will take the part of a revolted world against him, will sigh and condole with them as with poor injured beings, and will soften his charges and relax his requirements as being too severe. But how could they expect this? Would not any ambassador from an earthly court, who should thus betray the honor of his king, be despised by a universal world? And why should you require the ambassadors of the heavenly king to be the basest of mankind? Some who live in open sin, and others who "sacrifice unto their net and burn incense unto their drag;" who cannot be prevailed upon to lift one cry for mercy during the week, but spend their breath in profaning the divine names and reproaching religion; when they come to the house of God, cannot bear to hear anything but the soothing tones of mercy and peace. But what have they to do with peace? The grand secret is, that the natural heart wishes to be left in the undisturbed possession of its own pleasures, and to be solaced with self-esteem and with the hopes of future bliss. And because God spoils this self-esteem by his reproaches, and disturbs these pleasures by his commands, and crushes these hopes by his threatenings, therefore "the carnal mind is enmity against God." And in pro-

portion as the watchmen disturb its pride, its pleasures, and its hopes, the carnal mind is enmity against them. It would be well pleased to pursue its own pleasures unaccused of sin and soothed with the hope of future blessedness. But to be charged with rebellion, to be urged to relinquish its dearest idols, to have its peace assailed by the prophecy of evils to come, this it cannot bear.

My unhappy friends, as one of the watchmen I declare to you that it is not my pleasure to give you pain. Could you point out any way in which I could disquiet you less, which would comport with the duty I owe to God and with tenderness to your immortal interests, and for which you yourselves would not reproach me another day, I would gladly spare you. I have not desired the woful day, O Lord, thou knowest! But you see from our text that the responsibility of a watchman is great, trembling with presentiment of a judgment to come; that a serious account is to be taken of him, and a strict search made upon him for the blood of souls. I therefore dare not amuse you with softer tones, and neglect to warn you of the sins of your heart and the retributions of eternity.

True, God is merciful, but he is also holy and just. True, a Saviour's invitations, as they proceed from the throne of love, melt on every angel's ear; and all the enchanting sounds of grace and tenderness ought to be proclaimed on earth. But other sounds have proceeded from the lips of God. True, religion is sweet; but a poor condemned sinner has something more to do than to

keep holydays and sing along the road to heaven. He has first to settle a heavy account with his offended Judge. And this will cost him many a heart ache and many a bitter tear. Though religion is pleasant, the entrance into it is gloomy, and gloomy things must come to his ears and to his heart. A hardened sinner does not want so much to be built up as to be pulled down; not so much to believe that he *may* be pardoned as that he *needs* pardon; not so much that there is a physician as that he is sick. You may hold up the remedy and descant on divine mercy, and till men feel that they are undone, they will vacantly gaze at the pretty display, smile in your face, and think no more of it. You may tell them of the joys of religion, and they will answer, If this is all you have to say, our own tastes assure us that we can be happier in other things. Or if the mind is *convinced*, a conviction of the joys of religion, without a sense of guilt and ruin, will never make the sinner *die*, as Paul did "when the commandment came." It may exhilerate, it may draw tears, it may produce animal religion and make him *live the stronger*. It may enlist his selfishness on the side of religion, may prevent him from openly opposing it, may induce him to put on a profession and form of a thing deemed profitable; but it will never bring him to the foot of the cross, to lift the cries of a dying sinner for mercy. Christ is the only door by which men enter into religion and into life; and none will enter by this way but those who feel their guilt and ruin. Without these apprehensions one may have a blind, selfish reli-

gion; but a full exhibition of these truths is necessary to prevent a thousand deceptions, to make judicious Christians, to point to the very spot to which the remedy is to be applied, and to state the precise good for which application to Christ is to be made. Had not the terrors of the law been needful, they would not have been displayed on every page of the Bible, nor would the apostles have used this motive to persuade men.

In the process of bringing sinners to Christ, the several successive operations of instruction, awakening, conviction, and conversion are produced by the instrumentality of awful, soul-humbling, as well as comforting truths. For instruction there must be a display of every part of God's character, not the least essential of which is his displeasure against sin. For awakening the terrors of the law are manifestly necessary. We may fondly hope to see careless sinners overcome by the mercies of God, but experience proves that they are not so ingenuous,—that they are made of sterner stuff. They are under the dominion of selfishness, and you must ordinarily touch their interest to move them. We must display the terrors of the law to produce conviction also,—to impress sinners with a view of God's character and their own,—to show them the dreadful nature of sin, the extent of their guilt and ruin, and their perishing need of a Saviour. In the law they read both their character and doom. And when the watchmen describe these in the most terrifying and humbling terms, they are only the organs by which God utters his law. A mere exhibition of

mercy is not sufficient for conviction. How many sinners will sit and weep at a description of Christ's sufferings and the mercies of God, and by these mercies and tears encourage themselves to live without God in the world, and never think of crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And do not these persons need to know something of a condemning law? True, holy love is too disinterested to be excited by fear; but it is not love that is first to be produced. The mind must be awakened and convicted before it will love as redeemed sinners do.

Now what means can have a greater tendency to convict a sinner of his guilt, ruin, and helplessness, than plainly to describe to him his guilt, ruin, and helplessness, drawing proofs from the whole character of God, from the holiness and extent of his law, from the many obligations which sinners have violated, and from the unutterable punishment which they deserve? A deep sense of these awful truths is the very conviction desired; and one would think that a clear statement of the truths themselves would be the readiest way to make them felt. True, the mere statement will not convict, nor will the statement of any other truth convict without the action of the Spirit. But what part does the Spirit take in this matter? He only prepares the heart to be affected with the truths of God, and thus enables them to take hold of the mind and become motives to it. He never dissolves the connexion between action and motives. Those truths then which are best adapted to move the mind as it is moved under conviction, are the means

by which conviction is to be produced. And what truths can these be but those whose impression is the very conviction desired? God may make use of any truth or any event to *awaken* the mind. Sometimes a rash word has been used to impress him who uttered it or him who heard it; and sometimes a sinner has been roused to a view of his misery by observing the comforts of Christians. But whatever truth or circumstance may be employed to awaken the mind, conviction of these soul-humbling truths must follow or the impression comes to nothing. And what way so ready to produce the conviction as to urge the truths themselves? Why take a more circuitous route and not come right to the heart? This direct course, you say, will give offence. But to whom? To none but those on whom milder themes have been tried in vain. Good men will not be displeased. Those only will who have resisted all gentler motives and need some severer remedy in the last resort. And are their complaints reasonable and to be heeded? They are not reasonable. They will not yield to milder arguments, and yet they refuse to hear arguments of a graver cast. They pretend that by soothing accents they might be more affected, and yet by soothing accents they refuse to be won. Whether Sinai thunders or Calvary weeps, it is all the same to them. They have chosen their own way and are determined not to be disturbed in the way they have chosen. But would it be kind to them, would it be faithful to God, to gratify this fatal wish?

Nor is it unreasonably degrading to sinners to

hear their character and fate described. If they will degrade themselves by sin, the eternal God has a right to accuse and threaten; and they may know that he will not be scrupulous to execute, the pride of sinners notwithstanding. And the same God has a right to command his ministers to denounce his wrath. And when they obey, and tremblingly lay their hands on the bolts of his thunder, they do no more than he commands them. When they solemnly declare that men are sinners, and that impenitent sinners will be consigned to eternal fire, they say no more than the truth, which God has seen fit to reveal, not to torment before the time, but in tender love to men; which he has strictly commanded his ministers to proclaim, and which he has promised to bless. They say no more than the prophets, than Christ and his apostles said. These heavenly messengers took no circuitous route to come at the point, but with the simplicity and decision of "yea yea and nay nay," declared the controversy which God had with men, and from lips warm with prayer poured fourth vehement curses against the wicked. Yes, the same lips on which the strains of immortal love delighted to play,—which when opening on the theme of redeeming grace, breathed the fragrance of a thousand isles,—when they came to direct their breath against sin, would make an eruption which threatened to bury nations under the burning lava. They did not always dress their God in terrors; they clothed him also in the softer robes of mercy. All the perfections of God should be displayed, because all are useful for the conviction of men.

The last step in the process of bringing sinners to Christ is conversion; and for this the same truths are needful. True, fear will not produce holy love, nor will the hope of finding religion happier than sin produce it. Nor will addresses to any of the passions, nor will any form of moral suasion produce it. Did not men need a radical change of heart,—did their opposition to God arise from mere misconception of his character, then a representation of his mercy might remove prejudice and the work would be done. But no, they have no relish for his character after every explanation; and therefore not moral suasion, and nothing but the Spirit working a thorough change in their temper, can produce love. How then does the Spirit produce it? Not by convincing the sinner that he might make a profitable bargain by exchanging the pleasures of sin for those of religion, but by bringing a condemned rebel to submit and to fall in love with the glories of a holy and redeeming God. This is done by acting in his proper office. And what is his proper office? Hear and remember. "When he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." And how did Paul arrive at love? "When the commandment came sin revived and I died." The truth is, love is to be considered not merely in its own simple form, but as the basis of repentance and faith.—And by what motives does the Spirit lead the mind to repentance and faith? Repentance is exercised in view of all the glories of God's character, particularly his holiness, justice, and displeasure against

sin; in view of the purity and justice of his law, the exceeding sinfulness of sin and its desert of eternal punishment. These then are the motives by which the Spirit excites repentance, and therefore these awful and pride debasing truths are the best adapted means which *men* can use to excite repentance. And what are the motives by which the Spirit awakens faith? This grace is exercised in view of the holiness of God and of his law, the evil of sin, the ruined and helpless state of the sinner, and his need of a Saviour: in view also of the mercy and truth of God and the fulness and glories of the Redeemer. These then are the motives by which the Spirit excites faith. These soul humbling and God exalting truths of course are the best adapted means which ministers can use for this end. And does not a view of the demerits of sin have some influence to excite *love* also in its own proper form? Yes, even love. Behold the pardoned sinner washing her Saviour's feet with her tears, and hear him say that to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much. A view of the evil of sin will forever heighten the love of the redeemed: therefore a judicious exhibition of this truth will serve to promote love on earth.

For these several reasons I *dare not* suppress or soften those sublime and terrible truths which the divine law pronounces, lest my God should take me away; and with my present convictions I never shall,—unless indeed upon one condition,—and on this I will make the agreement with you. If you will all, my dear hearers, become the friends of

God, I will sound his threatenings against you no more. I *would* it were thus. I confess I am weary of this gloomy part of my duty. I would much rather, from the fountain of the promises, pour into your yielding hearts the consolations of religion. Come be the friends of God, and I will give you pain no more. But while many of you delay, neither tenderness to you nor the dread responsibility of a watchman, will allow me to suppress these awful truths. Do any yet plead that they might be more influenced by tender topics? Prove it then by being influenced by them. By the tenderest accents of mercy you have been often addressed. Arguments have been brought, as was fit, from the yearnings of immortal love and from the bloody dust of Calvary. Every wound of a dying Christ has pleaded with you, and a thousand melting invitations warm from heaven have mingled their sounds about your ears. Prove then your doctrine true by turning to God. Mercy has exhausted her sounds upon you, and if she would continue to plead, she must repeat the same sounds again. If then such sounds can move you, why, my beloved friends, do you not come? What obstruction is there in the way? O come. Else, and if you still complain that harsher means are used, what a strange appearance will you make in the eyes of heaven! Refusing to be melted by the voice of mercy, yet unwilling to hear the voice of justice! A king finds some of his subjects in unreasonable rebellion and condemns them to the rack, but in mercy sends his servants with offers of pardon upon condition that

they lay down their arms. They reject the offer, and then complain that accusations and threatenings are added. "Let the king," say they, change his words, or let his servants change them. Perhaps we might consent if softer terms were used." Presumptuous men! And did you think to confer a favor on the king by accepting pardon? Know ye that he has no need of you, and it was in mere pity that he made the offer. And since you will not accept of mercy, receive your sentence, *Ye shall surely die.*

Now then, my friends, my reasons are all before you, and I hope to be justified by your conscience while I proceed to execute the commission given me in the text. God has said to the wicked, "O wicked man, thou shalt surely die," and the watchmen are commanded upon their peril to sound the alarm. I therefore solemnly declare in the name of God, that there is a dreadful war waged by all the divine perfections against sin,—that all the power which supports the rights of heaven has taken the field,—that every glory of the Godhead points a livid lightning at your breast,—that the inviolable honor of heaven's King is enlisted and is coming down to crush a rebellious world.

In equally solemn tones I declare, as my office bids me, and call every angel to witness, that in this war *God is right and the world is wrong.* This great truth while I live I will declare, and hope to pronounce it with my dying breath. *God is right and the world is wrong.* I wish it were set forth in broad letters upon every forehead, and with a pen dipped in heaven were written upon every heart. I

wish it were posted in sun beams at the corner of every street, and were graven with the point of a diamond on the rock forever. *God is right and the world is wrong*. Let this great truth pass from land to land to prostrate nations of unknown tongues, and rolling through every clime, bring an humbled world to their Redeemer's feet.

Standing on my watch tower, I am commanded, if I see aught of evil coming, to give warning. I again solemnly declare that I do see evil approaching. I see a storm collecting in the heavens; I discover the commotion of the troubled elements; I hear the roar of distant winds. Heaven and earth seem mingled in conflict; and I cry to those for whom I watch, A storm! a storm! get into the ark or you are swept away.—Ah what *is* it I see? I see a world convulsed and falling to ruins; the sea burning like oil; nations rising from under ground; the sun falling; the damned in chains before the bar, and some of my poor hearers with them. I see them cast from the battlement of the judgment seat. My God, the eternal pit has closed upon them forever!

SERMON XL.

THE WEEPING AT THE LAST DAY.

LUKE XIII. 28.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

In some future day when men are sunk in stupidity as in the days before the flood,—when they are eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven. The blast of the last trumpet will rouse the world from sleep, will raise the dead and summon the universe to judgment. The heavens shall pass away with a great noise; the earth shall be on fire; the sea shall burn like oil. In the open space between heaven and earth, the Son of man, arrayed "in the glory of his Father" and surrounded with saints and angels, shall fix his throne of judgment. "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The books shall be

opened, in which are recorded all the actions of men; the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed; every idle word shall be brought into judgment; every dark corner of the life shall be laid open; the shame of sinners shall be exposed to all. The Judge shall then say to those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." But to those on the left hand he will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." In that day there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when the wicked Jews, the children of the covenant, who boasted their descent from Abraham, shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out.

These words lead us to reflect on the miseries of the wicked at the last day.

It will be the time of the final separation of near and dear friends. The line of division will sunder many a father's house. A parent will be on one side and a child on the other; a husband on one side and a wife on the other; brother will be parted from brother and sister from sister. When sinners shall look away beyond the gulph and see in heaven their former acquaintance, the companions of their youth, their neighbors, those who met them from sabbath to sabbath in the house of God, who used to sit on the same seat and stand by their side in prayer;—when they shall look up and see the mem-

bers of their father's family, those who were nursed at the same breast and partook of their youthful sports,—when they shall see a father, a mother, a wife, a child, forever separated from them, and admitted to that banquet from which they are eternally excluded,—O then there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Their sorrows will be increased by a remembrance of the opportunities and privileges they have lost. This remembrance will be awakened in the Jews when they see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God. When sinners shall look back to sabbaths which dawned upon them with heavenly light,—to seasons in the house of God under awakening sermons,—to days when they might have had frequent access to prayer meetings,—to years in which their closets offered them a retreat for prayer and their Bible lay mouldering on its shelf; when they shall look back to days in which the Spirit of God moved upon their minds,—to hours when their souls were awakened to prayer by a sense of eternal realities, and when their hands seemed to take hold of the very threshold of heaven; when they shall look back to days of divine power when Jesus of Nazareth passed by, when multitudes pressed into the kingdom of heaven and almost bore them in on their shoulders; when they shall reflect how near they came to heaven and yet fell short; then will they "mourn at the last when" their "flesh and" their "body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof." "I had a soul but prized it not, and now my soul is gone."

In that day they will call upon every being that has ears to pity and relieve them, (as the rich man cried to Abraham,) but will find them all deaf to their prayers. They will entreat God to mitigate his wrath and give them a little respite, but will only receive this answer: "Because I—called and ye refused, I—stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye—set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock" now "your fear cometh." They will entreat their parents, their brothers, their children, by all their former love, to send some one to "dip the tip of his finger in water and cool" their "tongue," and will not move compassion enough in all heaven to grant this small relief. They will cry to rocks and mountains to cover them, but rocks and mountains will have passed away. They will pour their lamentations on the ears of hell, but no sound will come back but groans and reproaches. Not a solitary friend will they find through the bounds of universal being. They will see an enemy in every creature they meet. No companions will they have but devils and the frightful ghosts of hell, who will only prove their tormentors. Ten thousand times will they wish that they could spend their eternity alone; but even this boon will be denied them. On earth they thought that if worst come to worst they should have company enough; but now they find that the more fuel the more fire.

They will utterly despair of all good,—of ever seeing another pleasant hour or pleasant thing to

eternity. They will utterly despair of one moment's respite from pain, or the least mitigation. All happiness will have flown forever. If a single day of comfort could come after ten thousand ages of misery, they would have something to look forward to; but now they have nothing but the blackness of darkness forever, growing still darker as the ages of eternity revolve. They are utterly undone, and their constant cry will be, O that I had never been born! O that I could sink into nothing and be no more!

An unspeakable aggravation of their misery will be their guilt and shame. When their eyes are opened to see the eternal love against which they have always been in arms,—the infinite majesty which they have insulted and defied,—the dying compassion which they have trodden under foot,—and that immeasurable good which they have sought to destroy, they will be crushed under guilt and shame beyond the reach of thought. Remorse will be the never dying worm that will gnaw their vitals. As dreadful as eternal damnation is, and as selfish and proud as they will still remain, they will feel that they deserve it all. With all the haughtiness of their pride raging without restraint, to be held up to public scorn, so polluted, so degraded, so accursed, will fill them with agonies of shame not to be described. The contempt with which they will be regarded by their former acquaintance,—their former dependants,—their former admirers,—the infamy of your state prisons is glory to this.

The passions of the damned will be left unbridled.

Their selfishness and pride, their malice and envy, will rage without restraint. A tempest of passion will tear and rend them with the fury of whirlwinds. There shall be weeping and *gnashing of teeth.*—They will gnash upon God, they will gnash upon his saints, they will gnash upon their tormentors. Those who have known the agony which only one of these passions can effect, may judge of the torment produced by them all when every restraint is taken away.

But that which will blast and wither all their powers is the wrath of an infinite God,—a God from whose hands none can deliver them. In this life the anger of God is less regarded than the displeasure of men: but in that day they would rather have all creation incensed against them than God alone. When they awake and find him their enemy whose being and power are above created thought; when they fall into his hands and are lashed and broken by almighty strength; how will they stand appalled and overwhelmed. The cloud that darkens the earth and breaks in jarring thunders on the affrighted town; the earthquake that with tremendous roar suddenly bursts upon the astonished city; these awaken terrors not to be described: but neither the thunder that jars the world, nor the earthquake that heaves the agitated ground, nor the shriek of sinking thousands, can raise such terrors as the wrath of an incensed God. When the damned, overwhelmed with guilt, shall behold God their enemy,—their infinite enemy,—their eternal enemy,—an enemy from whom none can deliver them,—and

shall see all the energies of his justice engaged to crush them as a worm beneath a falling rock,—the terror that will appal them,—but language fails; I leave imagination to supply the rest.

Need I advert to any *bodily* pains to render their sufferings complete? But God has said that they shall be cast into a lake of fire. He has said it often, and has never *un*said it. He has never hinted that the representation is figurative; and I know of no consideration drawn from Scripture or reason, against the literal construction of these numerous texts. If you say, it is too dreadful to be believed, I answer; if it is not fire it must be something as bad, or the Scriptures have practised a great deception upon us. And if it is something as bad, why may it not as well be literal fire as anything else? Besides, if there is any place where figures are not employed, it is on the judgment seat, in the act of passing a judicial sentence. This is certainly the case in human affairs. But he who is to be the Judge has told us exactly what the sentence will be: "Then shall he say—unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And is this judicial language from the judgment seat nothing but poetry?

To complete the misery it will be eternal. On earth few cases are so bad as not to admit of the hope of amelioration. The deepest wretchedness looks forward, with some expectation, to those numerous casualties which, hid in the womb of future years, may tinge with a brighter hue the sable web

of life. But *there* no chance remains for hope to fix on. All is blank despair: all is *eternal* misery. Could they escape after they had suffered as many millions of ages as there are stars in heaven, added to all the sands of the sea, and all the spires upon the mountains, and all the leaves in the forest, the sunken eye of hell could be illumined with hope. But FOREVER,—that one word withers all their expectations and rivets them to infinite despair. And if their misery is eternally to increase, so that what they now endure is nothing to what they expect, then it is infinite despair multiplied into infinite despair.

I would drop down among that despairing company a thousand ages hence, and ask them, What now think you of the Bible? of sabbaths? of opportunities for prayer? of the day of probation you enjoyed in yonder world? What now think you of your former folly in putting off religion and neglecting your souls? I should be answered by one loud and universal groan. But blessed be God, I am speaking to a different assembly,—to an assembly of living men, in a world of hope. But am I not speaking to some who will be in those cirumstances at last? God knows. I fear there are some such in this house. How many of you have lived twenty, thirty, forty years without religion, and still are sunk in stupidity! In this state of stupidity the greater part of those who have passed the middle of life, in all probability will die. They will go on making a thousand excuses and hoping for future conversion, until they open their eyes in torment.

Thus men have done in all past ages; thus they are likely still to do. And why should this congregation be exempt? I will not conceal my anxiety. My soul is distressed with the apprehension that I shall another day see some of my hearers crying to rocks and mountains to cover them, and cursing the day that they ever heard a Gospel sermon. All the entreaties of God and man cannot bring them to pray in their families, nor even in their closets. All the blaze of light around them cannot stop them from making excuses and casting the blame of their impenitence upon God. We may weep over them till our hearts break, and yet they will not have an anxious thought about their well being in all future ages; and yet many of them have already passed the period of probable conversion. If they fully believed that the grave would terminate their existence, I should not wonder. But perhaps they all believe that they shall live as long as the throne of God endures. With such a creed,—to be anxious to provide for old age, and take no thought for all the years between seventy and a thousand,—between a thousand and an epoch which numbers cannot reach,—this is madness,—this is folly that wants a name.

My dearly beloved hearers, practise no longer upon yourselves the cruelty of tigers. Have some compassion on those souls for which a Saviour died. Have mercy on yourselves: have mercy on *me*. O for mercy, mercy, mercy! I cry to you as a dying man for relief. If you will not hear these supplications, perhaps you in your turn may stand and pray

to one in vain, and in vain say, Mercy, mercy, mercy. My prayer to you is for this one boon, that you would be happy yourselves. Grant me this and I ask no more. I entreat you by that compassion which "looked down from the height of the sanctuary—to hear the groaning of the prisoner and to loose those that" were "appointed to death;" I beseech you by that love which bled on Calvary, —by that patience which has called after you from your childhood. I warn you by all the dreadful weight of your guilt, by the terrors of a dying bed, by the solemnities of the last judgment. In the name and by the authority of the eternal God I charge you not to make your bed in hell.

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

441129

BX
7233
G73
1839
v.2 THEOLOGY LIBRARY
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

441129